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SHAFTESBURY'S
CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS

OF

Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc.

By the Right Honourable

ANTHONY EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

London
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1900

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CONTENTS

TREATISE V

THE MORALISTS, A PHILOSOPHICAL RHAPSODY

PAGE
PART I.—Section I 3
,, II 10
,, III 20
PART II.—Section I 26
,, II 40
,, III 47
,, IV 60
,, V 84
PART III.—Section I 95
,, II 124
,, III 145

TREATISE VI

MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS ON THE PRECEDING TREATISES, ETC.

MISCELLANY I

CHAPTER I

Of the nature, rise, and establishment of Miscellanies—The subject of these which follow—Intention of the writer . . . 157

CHAPTER II

PAGE

Of controversial writings: answers: replies—Polemic divinity, or the writing Church militant—Philosophers, and bear garden—Authors paired and matched—The matchmakers—Football—A dialogue between our author and his bookseller . . . 161

CHAPTER III

Of the letter concerning Enthusiasm—Foreign critics—Of letters in general, and of the epistolary style—Addresses to great men—Authors and horsemanship—The modern amble—Further explanation of the miscellaneous manner 166

MISCELLANY II

CHAPTER I

Review of Enthusiasm—Its defence, praise—Use in business as well as pleasure—Operation by fear. Love—Modifications of enthusiasm; magnanimity; heroic virtue; honour; public zeal: religion; superstition; persecution; martyrdom—Energy of the ecstatic devotion in the tender sex Account of ancient priesthood—Religious war—Reference to a succeeding chapter . 173

CHAPTER II

Judgment of divines and grave authors concerning Enthusiasm—Reflections upon scepticism—A sceptic Christian—Judgment of the inspired concerning their own inspirations—Knowledge and belief—History of religion resumed—Zeal offensive and defensive—A Church in danger—Persecution—Policy of the Church of Rome 196

CHAPTER III

PAGE

Of the force of humour in religion—Support of our author's argument in his essay on the freedom of wit and raillery—Zeal discussed. Spiritual surgeons; executioners; carvers—Original of human sacrifice—Exhilaration of religion—Various aspects from outward causes 215

MISCELLANY III

CHAPTER I

Further remarks on the author of the treatises—His order and design—His remarks on the succession of wit, and progress of letters, and philosophy—Of words, relations, affections—Countrymen and country—Old England—Patriots of the soil—Virtuosi and philosophers—A taste 238

CHAPTER II

Explanation of a taste continued—Ridiculers of it—Their wit and sincerity—Application of the taste to affairs of Government and politics—Imaginary characters in the State—Young nobility and gentry—Pursuit of beauty—Preparation for philosophy . 256

MISCELLANY IV

CHAPTER I

Connection and union of the subject-treatises—Philosophy in form—Metaphysics—Egoity—Identity—Moral footing—Proof and discipline of the fancies—Settlement of opinion—Anatomy of the mind—A fable 273

CHAPTER II

PAGE
Passage from *terra incognita* to the visible world—Mistress-ship of nature—Animal confederacy, degrees, subordination—Master animal man—Privilege of his birth—Serious countenance of the author 286

MISCELLANY V

CHAPTER I

Ceremonial adjusted between author and reader—Affectation of precedency in the former—Various claims to inspiration—Bards, prophets, Sibylline Scripture—Written oracles, in verse and prose—Common interest of ancient letters and Christianity—State of wit, elegance, and correctness—Poetic truth—Preparation for criticism on our author in his concluding treatise . 296

CHAPTER II

Generation and succession of our national and modern wit—Manners of the proprietors—Corporation and joint stock—Statute against criticism—A coffee-house committee—Mr. Bays—Other Bays' in divinity--Censure of our author's dialogue piece, and of the manner of dialogue writing used by reverend wits . . 324

CHAPTER III

Of extent or latitude of thought—Free-thinkers—Their cause and character—Dishonesty, a half-thought—Short-thinking, cause of vice and bigotry—Agreement of slavery and superstition—Liberty, civil, moral, spiritual—Free-thinking divines—Representatives incognito—Ambassadors from the moon—Effectual determination of Christian controversy and religious belief . . . 341

TREATISE V

THE MORALISTS,

A Philosophical Rhapsody

BEING

A Recital of certain Conversations on Natural and Moral Subjects

> Inter silvas Academi quaerere verum.
> Hor. *Ep.* II. ii.

Published in the year MDCCIX.

1709

THE MORALISTS, A PHILOSOPHICAL RHAPSODY

PART I

SECTION I

Philocles to Palemon

WHAT mortal, if he had never chanced to hear your character, Palemon, could imagine that a genius fitted for the greatest affairs, and formed amidst courts and camps, should have so violent a turn towards philosophy and the schools? Who is there could possibly believe that one of your rank and credit in the fashionable world should be so thoroughly conversant in the learned one, and deeply interested in the affairs of a people so disagreeable to the generality of mankind and humour of the age?

I believe, truly, you are the only well-bred man who would have taken the fancy to talk philosophy in such a circle of good company as we had round us yesterday, when we were in your coach together, in the Park. How you could reconcile the objects there to such subjects as these was unaccountable. I could only conclude, that either you had an extravagant passion for philosophy, to quit so many charms for it, or that some of those tender charms had an extravagant effect, which sent you to philosophy for relief.

In either case I pitied you; thinking it a milder fate to be, as I truly was for my own part, a more indifferent lover.

'Twas better, I told you, to admire beauty and wisdom a little more moderately. 'Twas better, I maintained, to engage so cautiously as to be sure of coming off with a whole heart, and a fancy as strong as ever towards all the pretty entertainments and diversions of the world. For these, methought, were things one would not willingly part with for a fine romantic passion of one of those gentlemen whom they called virtuosi.

The name I took to belong in common to your lover and philosopher; no matter what the object was, whether poetry, music, philosophy, or the fair. All who were enamoured anyway were in the same condition. You might perceive it, I told you, by their looks, their admiration, their profound thoughtfulness, their waking ever and anon as out of a dream, their talking still of one thing, and scarce minding what they said on any other subject—sad indications!

But all this warning served not to deter you. For you, Palemon, are one of the adventurous, whom danger rather animates than discourages. And now nothing less will satisfy you than to have our philosophical adventures recorded. All must be laid before you and summed in one complete account; to remain, it seems, as a monument of that unseasonable conversation so opposite to the reigning genius of gallantry and pleasure.

I must own, indeed, 'tis become fashionable in our nation to talk politics in every company, and mix the discourses of State affairs with those of pleasure and entertainment. However, 'tis certain we approve of no such freedom in philosophy. Nor do we look upon politics to be of her province, or in the least related to her. So much have we moderns degraded her, and stripped her of her chief rights.

You must allow me, Palemon, thus to bemoan philosophy, since you have forced me to engage with her at a time when her credit runs so low. She is no longer active in the world, nor can hardly, with any advantage, be brought upon the public stage. We have immured her, poor lady, in colleges and cells, and have set her servilely to such works as those in the mines. Empirics and pedantic sophists are her chief pupils. The school-syllogism and the elixir are the choicest of her products. So far is she from producing statesmen, as of old, that hardly any man of note in the public cares to own the least obligation to her. If some few maintain their acquaintance, and come now and then to her recesses, 'tis as the disciple of quality came to his lord and master, "secretly, and by night."

But as low as philosophy is reduced, if morals be allowed belonging to her, politics must undeniably be hers. For to understand the manners and constitutions of men in common, 'tis necessary to study man in particular, and know the creature as he is in himself, before we consider him in company, as he is interested in the State, or joined to any city or community. Nothing is more familiar than to reason concerning man in his confederate state and national relation, as he stands engaged to this or that society, by birth or naturalisation; yet to consider him as a citizen or commoner of the world, to trace his pedigree a step higher, and view his end and constitution in Nature itself, must pass, it seems, for some intricate or over-refined speculation.

It may be properly alleged perhaps, as a reason for this general shyness in moral inquiries, that the people to whom it has principally belonged to handle these subjects have done it in such a manner as to put the better sort out of countenance with the undertaking. The appropriating this concern to mere scholastics has brought their fashion and air into the very subject. There are formal set-places where, we reckon, there is enough said and taught on the head of these graver subjects. We can give no quarter to anything like it in good company. The least mention of such matters gives us a disgust, and puts us out of humour. If learning comes across us, we count it pedantry; if morality, 'tis preaching.

One must own this, however, as a real disadvantage of our modern conversations, that by such a scrupulous nicety they lose those masculine helps of learning and sound reason. Even the fair sex, in whose favour we pretend to make this condescension, may with reason despise us for it, and laugh at us for aiming at their peculiar softness. 'Tis no compliment to them to affect their manners and be effeminate. Our sense, language, and style, as well as our voice and person, should have something of that male-feature and natural roughness by which our sex is distinguished. And whatever politeness we may pretend to, 'tis more a disfigurement than any real refinement of discourse to render it thus delicate.

No work of wit can be esteemed perfect without that strength and boldness of hand which gives it body and proportions. A good piece, the painters say, must have good muscling as well as colouring and drapery. And surely no writing or discourse of any great moment can seem other than enervated when neither strong reason, nor antiquity, nor the records of things, nor the natural history of man, nor anything which can be called knowledge, dares accompany it, except perhaps in some ridiculous habit, which may give it an air of play and dalliance.

This brings to my mind a reason I have often sought for, why we moderns who abound so much in treatises and essays are so sparing in the way of dialogue,[1] which heretofore was found the politest and best way of managing even the graver subjects. The truth is, 'twould be an abominable falsehood and belying of the age to put so much good sense together in any one conversation as might make it hold out steadily and with plain coherence for an hour's time, till any one subject had been rationally examined.[2]

To lay colours, to draw, or describe, against the appearance of nature and truth, is a liberty neither permitted the painter nor the poet. Much less can the philosopher have such a privilege, especially in his own case. If he represents his philosophy as making any figure in conversation, if he triumphs in the debate, and gives his own wisdom the advantage over that of the world, he may be liable to sound raillery, and possibly be made a fable of.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part i. § 3; *Misc.* v. ch. ii.

[2] [Compare Swift's *Polite Conversation,* and *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.*]

'Tis said of the lion, that being in civil conference with the man, he wisely refused to yield the superiority of strength to him, when instead of fact the man produced only certain figures and representations of human victories over the lion-kind. These master-pieces of art the beast discovered to be wholly of human forgery; and from these he had good right to appeal. Indeed had he ever in his life been witness to any such combats as the man represented to him in the way of art, possibly the example might have moved him. But old statues of a Hercules, a Theseus, or other beast-subduers, could have little power over him, whilst he neither saw nor felt any such living antagonist capable to dispute the field with him.

We need not wonder, therefore, that the sort of moral painting, by way of dialogue, is so much out of fashion, and that we see no more of these philosophical portraitures nowadays. For where are the originals? Or what though you, Palemon, or I, by chance, have lighted on such a one, and pleased ourselves with the life? Can you imagine it should make a good picture?

You know, too, that in this academic philosophy I am to present you with, there is a certain way of questioning and doubting, which no way suits the genius of our age. Men love to take party instantly. They cannot bear being kept in suspense. The examination torments them. They want to be rid of it upon the easiest terms. 'Tis as if men fancied themselves drowning whenever they dare trust to the current of reason. They seem hurrying away they know not whither, and are ready to catch at the first twig. There they choose afterwards to hang, though ever so insecurely, rather than trust their strength to bear them above water. He who has got hold of an hypothesis, how slight soever, is satisfied. He can presently answer every objection, and, with a few terms of art, give an account of everything without trouble.

'Tis no wonder if in this age the philosophy of the alchemists prevails so much,[1] since it promises such wonders, and requires more the labour of hands than brains. We have a strange fancy to be creators, a violent desire at least to know the knack or secret by which Nature does all. The rest of our philosophers only aim at that in speculation which our alchemists aspire to in practice. For with some of these it has been actually under deliberation how to make Man, by other mediums than Nature has hitherto provided. Every sect has a recipe. When you know it, you are master of Nature: you solve all her phenomena,[2] you see all her designs, and can account for all her operations. If need were you might perchance, too, be of her laboratory and work for her. At least one would imagine the partizans of each modern sect had this conceit. They are all Archimedeses in their way, and can make a world upon easier terms than he offered to move one.

In short, there are good reasons for our being thus superficial, and consequently thus dogmatical in philosophy. We are too lazy and effeminate, and withal a little too cowardly, to dare doubt. The decisive way best becomes our manners.

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[1] [Boyle himself, who was at his strongest in chemistry, left to his executors at his death, in 1691, a quantity of red earth "with directions for endeavouring to turn it into gold." Locke, however, seems to have been persuaded by Newton to give up the experiment as useless. See Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii. 223-225. The correspondence of Spinoza (*Epp.* xlv. and lxvi. B., 1667 and 1675) mentions similar instances of credulity among his friends. It appears that his correspondent Schaller, a qualified physician, believed he had "made gold" by a certain process. Spinoza, like Newton, was finally quite incredulous. Doubtless the prevalent opinion a generation later was still on the side of fallacy.]

[2] See *Misc.* iii. ch. i.

It suits as well with our vices as with our superstition. Whichever we are fond of is secured by it. If in favour of religion we have espoused an hypothesis on which our faith, we think, depends, we are superstitiously careful not to be loosened in it. If, by means of our ill morals, we are broken with religion, 'tis the same case still: we are as much afraid of doubting. We must be sure to say, "It cannot be," and "'tis demonstrable. For otherwise who knows? And not to know is to yield!"

Thus, we will needs know everything, and be at the pains of examining nothing. Of all philosophy, therefore, how absolutely the most disagreeable must that appear which goes upon no established hypothesis, nor presents us with any flattering scheme, talks only of probabilities, suspense of judgment, inquiry, search, and caution not to be imposed on or deceived? This is that academic discipline in which formerly the youth were trained;[1] when not only horsemanship and military arts had their public places of exercise, but philosophy too had its wrestlers in repute. Reason and Wit had their academy, and underwent this trial, not in a formal way, apart from the world, but openly, among the better sort, and as an exercise of the genteeler kind. This the greatest men were not ashamed to practise in the intervals of public affairs, in the highest stations and employments, and at the latest hour of their lives. Hence that way of dialogue, and patience of debate and reasoning, of which we have scarce a resemblance left in any of our conversations at this season of the world.

Consider then, Palemon, what our picture is like to prove, and how it will appear, especially in the light you have unluckily chosen to set it. For who would thus have confronted philosophy with the gaiety, wit, and humour of the age? If this, however, can be for your credit I am content. The project is your own. 'Tis you who have matched philosophy thus unequally. Therefore leaving you to answer for the success, I begin this inauspicious work, which my ill stars and you have assigned me, and in which I hardly dare ask succour of the Muses, as poetical as I am obliged to show myself in this enterprise.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part iii. § 3, and notes.

SECTION II

"O WRETCHED state of mankind! Hapless Nature, thus to have erred in thy chief workmanship! Whence sprang this fatal weakness? What chance or destiny shall we accuse? Or shall we mind the poets when they sing thy tragedy, Prometheus! who with thy stolen celestial fire, mixed with vile clay, didst mock heaven's countenance, and in abusive likeness of the immortals madest the compound man: that wretched mortal, ill to himself, and cause of ill to all."

What say you, Palemon, to this rant, now upon second thoughts? Or have you forgot 'twas just in such a romantic strain that you broke out against human kind, upon a day when everything looked pleasing, and the kind itself, I thought, never appeared fairer or made a better show.

But 'twas not the whole creation you thus quarrelled with, nor were you so out of conceit with all beauty. The verdure of the field, the distant prospects, the gilded horizon and purple sky, formed by a setting sun, had charms in abundance, and were able to make impression on you. Here, Palemon, you allowed me to admire as much as I pleased, when, at the same instant, you would not bear my talking to you of those nearer beauties of our own kind, which I thought more natural for men at our age to admire. Your severity however could not silence me upon this subject. I continued to plead the cause of the fair, and advance their charms above all those other beauties of Nature. And when you took advantage from this opposition to show how little there was of Nature and how much of Art in what I admired, I made the best apology I could, and fighting for beauty, kept the field as long as there was one fair one present.

Considering how your genius stood inclined to poetry, I wondered most to find you on a sudden grown so out of conceit with our modern poets and *galante* writers, whom I quoted to you as better authorities than any ancient in behalf of the fair sex and their prerogative. But this you treated slightly. You acknowledged it to be true indeed, what had been observed by some late wits, "that gallantry was of a modern growth." And well it might be so, you thought, without dishonour to the ancients, who understood Truth and Nature too well to admit so ridiculous an invention.

'Twas in vain, therefore, that I held up this shield in my defence. I did my cause no service, when in behalf of the fair I pleaded all the fine things which are usually said in this romantic way to their advantage. You attacked the very fortress of gallantry, ridiculed the point of honour, with all those nice sentiments and ceremonials belonging to it. You damned even our favourite novels: those dear, sweet, natural pieces, writ most of them by the fair sex themselves. In short, this whole order and scheme of wit you condemned absolutely as false, monstrous, and Gothic; quite out of the way of Nature, and sprung from the mere dregs of chivalry or knight-errantry; a thing which in itself you preferred, as of a better taste than that which reigns at present in its stead. For at a time when this mystery of gallantry carried along with it the notion of doughty knighthood, when the fair were made witnesses and, in a manner, parties to feats of arms, entered into all the points of war and combat, and were won by dint of lance and manly prowess, 'twas not altogether absurd, you thought, on such a foundation as this, to pay them homage and adoration, make them the standard of wit and manners, and bring mankind under their laws. But in a country where no she-saints were worshipped by any authority from religion, 'twas as impertinent and senseless as it was profane to deify the sex, raise them to a capacity above what Nature had allowed, and treat them with a respect which in the natural way of love they themselves were the aptest to complain of.

Indeed as for the moral part, 'twas wonderful, you said, to observe the licentiousness which this foppish, courtly humour had established in the world. What such a flattering way of address to all the sex in common could mean you knew not, unless it were to render them wholly common indeed, and make each fair one apprehend that the public had a right to her, and that beauty was too communicative and divine a thing to be made a property and confined to one at once.

Meanwhile our company began to leave us. The *beau-monde*, whom you had been thus severely censuring, drew off apace, for it grew late. I took notice that the approaching objects of the night were the more agreeable to you for the solitude they introduced, and that the moon and planets which began now to appear were in reality the only proper company for a man in your humour. For now you began to talk with much satisfaction of natural things, and of all orders of beauties, man only excepted. Never did I hear a finer description than you made of the order of the heavenly luminaries, the circles of the planets, and their attendant satellites. And you who would allow nothing to those fair earthly luminaries in the circles which just now we moved in; you, Palemon, who seemed to overlook the pride of that theatre, began now to look out with ravishment on this other, and triumph in the new philosophical scene of worlds unknown. Here, when you had pretty well spent the first fire of your imagination, I would have got you to reason more calmly with me upon that other part of the creation, your own kind, to which, I told you, you discovered so much aversion as would make one believe you a complete Timon or man-hater.

"Can you then, O Philocles," said you in a high strain, and with a moving air of passion—"can you believe me of that character? or can you think it of me in earnest, that being man, and conscious of my nature, I should have yet so little of humanity as not to feel the affections of a man? or feeling what is natural towards my kind, that I should hold their interest light, and be indifferently affected with what affects or seriously concerns them? Am I so ill a lover of my country? or is it that you find me indeed so ill a friend? For what are all relations else? What are the ties of private friendship if that to mankind be not obliging? Can there be yet a bond in Nature if that be none? O Philocles! believe me when I say I feel it one, and fully prove its power within me. Think not that I would willingly break my chain; nor count me so degenerate or unnatural as whilst I hold this form and wear a human heart I should throw off love, compassion, kindness, and not befriend mankind. But oh! what treacheries! what disorders! and how corrupt is all! . . . Did you not observe even now, when all this space was filled with goodly rows of company, how peaceful all appeared. . . . What charms there are in public companies! What harmony in courts and courtly places! How pleased is every face! how courteous and humane the general carriage and behaviour! . . . What creature capable of reflection, if he thus saw us mankind, and saw no more, would not believe our earth a very heaven? What foreigner (the inhabitant, suppose, of some near planet) when he had travelled hither, and surveyed this outward face of things, would think of what lay hid beneath the mask? But let him stay awhile. Allow him leisure, till he has gained a nearer view, and following our dissolved assemblies to their particular recesses, he has the power of seeing them in this new aspect. . . . Here he may behold those great men of the Ministry, who not an hour ago in public appeared such friends, now plotting craftily each other's ruin, with the ruin of the State itself, a sacrifice to their ambition. Here he may see too those of a softer kind, who knowing not ambition, follow only love. Yet, Philocles, who would think it?" . . .

At these words, you may remember, I discovered the lightness of my temper and laughed aloud, which I could hardly hope you would have pardoned had I not freely told you the true reason. 'Twas not for want of being affected with what you spoke. I only imagined a more particular cause had provoked you, when having passed over the ambitious, you were coming full-charged against the people of a softer passion. At first I looked on you as deeply in the spleen, but now I concluded you in love, and so unhappily engaged as to have reason to complain of infidelity. "This," thought I, "has moved Palemon thus. Hence the sad world! Here was that corruption, and those disorders he lamented!"

After I had begged pardon for my rude mirth, which had the good fortune however to make some change in your humour, we fell naturally into cool reasoning about the nature and cause of ill in general: "through what contingency, what chance, by what fatal necessity, what will, or what permission it came upon the world, or being come once, should still subsist." This inquiry,[1] which with slight reasoners is easily got over, stuck hard, I found, with one of your close judgment and penetration. And this insensibly led us into a nice criticism of Nature, whom you sharply arraigned for many absurdities you thought her guilty of, in relation to mankind, and his peculiar state.

Fain would I have persuaded you to think with more equality of Nature, and to proportion her defects a little better. My notion was, that the grievance lay not altogether in one part, as you placed it, but that everything had its share of inconvenience: pleasure and pain, beauty and deformity, good and ill, seemed to me everywhere interwoven; and one with another made, I thought, a pretty mixture, agreeable enough in the main. 'Twas the same, I fancied, as in some of those rich stuffs where the flowers and ground were oddly put together with such irregular work and contrary colours as looked ill in the pattern, but mighty natural and well in the piece.

But you were still upon extremes. Nothing would serve to excuse the faults or blemishes of this part of the creation, mankind, even though all besides were fair, without a blemish.

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[1] Treatise IV. See the beginning.

The very storms and tempests had their beauty in your account, those alone excepted which arose in human breasts. 'Twas only for this turbulent race of mortals you offered to accuse Nature. And I now found why you had been so transported with the story of Prometheus. You wanted such an operator as this for mankind, and you were tempted to wish the story could have been confirmed in modern divinity; that clearing the supreme powers of any concern or hand in the ill workmanship, you might have the liberty of inveighing against it without profaneness.

This however, I told you, was but a slight evasion of the religious poets among the ancients. 'Twas easy to answer every objection by a Prometheus: as, "Why had mankind originally so much folly and perverseness? why so much pride, such ambition, and strange appetites? why so many plagues and curses entailed on him and his posterity?" Prometheus was the cause. The plastic artist, with his unlucky hand, solved all. "'Twas his contrivance," they said, "and he was to answer for it." They reckoned it a fair game if they could gain a single remove and put the evil cause farther off. If the people asked a question, they told them a tale, and sent them away satisfied. None besides a few philosophers would be such busybodies, they thought, as to look beyond, or ask a second question.

And in reality, continued I, 'tis not to be imagined how serviceable a tale is to amuse others besides mere children, and how much easier the generality of men are paid in this paper-coin than in sterling reason. We ought not to laugh so readily at the Indian philosophers, who, to satisfy their people how this huge frame of the world is supported, tell them 'tis by an elephant. And the elephant how? . . . A shrewd question! but which by no means should be answered. 'Tis here only that our Indian philosophers are to blame. They should be contented with the elephant, and go no farther. But they have a tortoise in reserve, whose back, they think, is broad enough.

So the tortoise must bear the new load; and thus the matter stands worse than before.

The heathen story of Prometheus was, I told you, much the same with this Indian one, only the heathen mythologists were so wise as not to go beyond the first remove. A single Prometheus was enough to take the weight from Jove. They fairly made Jove a stander-by. He resolved, it seems, to be neuter, and see what would come of this notable experiment; how the dangerous man-moulder would proceed, and what would be the event of his tampering. . . . Excellent account to satisfy the heathen vulgar! But how, think you, would a philosopher digest this? "For the Gods," he would say presently, "either could have hindered Prometheus's creation or they could not. If they could, they were answerable for the consequences; if they could not, they were no longer Gods, being thus limited and controlled. And whether Prometheus were a name for chance, destiny, a plastic nature, or an evil daemon, whatever was designed by it, 'twas still the same breach of omnipotence."

That such a hazardous affair as this of creation should have been undertaken by those who had not perfect foresight as well as command, you owned was neither wise nor just. But you stood to foresight. You allowed the consequences to have been understood by the creating powers when they undertook their work, and you denied that it would have been better for them to have omitted it, though they knew what would be the event. "'Twas better still that the project should be executed, whatever might become of mankind, or how hard soever such a creation was like to fall on the generality of this miserable race. For 'twas impossible, you thought, that Heaven should have acted otherwise than for the best. So that even from this misery and ill of man there was undoubtedly some good arising, something which over-balanced all, and made full amends."

This was a confession I wondered indeed how I came to draw from you; and soon afterwards I found you somewhat uneasy under it. For here I took up your own part against you, and setting all those villanies and corruptions of human kind in the same light you had done just before, I put it upon you to tell where possibly could be the advantage or good arising hence, or what excellence or beauty could redound from those tragical pictures you yourself had drawn so well after the life. Whether it must not be a very strong philosophical faith which should persuade one that those dismal parts you set to view were only the necessary shades of a fine piece, to be reckoned among the beauties of the creation, or whether possibly you might look upon that maxim as very fit for heaven, which I was sure you did not approve at all in mankind, "to do ill that good might follow."

This, I said, made me think of the manner of our modern Prometheuses, the mountebanks, who performed such wonders of many kinds here on our earthly stages. They could create diseases and make mischief in order to heal and to restore. But should we assign such a practice as this to Heaven? Should we dare to make such empirics of the Gods, and such a patient of poor Nature? "Was this a reason for Nature's sickliness? Or how else came she (poor innocent!) to fall sick, or run astray? Had she been originally healthy, or created sound at first, she had still continued so. 'Twas no credit to the Gods to leave her destitute, or with a flaw which would cost dear the mending, and make them sufferers for their own work."

I was going to bring Homer to witness for the many troubles of Jove, the death of Sarpedon, and the frequent crosses Heaven met with from the fatal sisters. But this discourse, I saw, displeased you. I had by this time plainly discovered my inclination to Scepticism. And here not only religion was objected to me, but I was reproached too on the account of that gallantry which I had some time before defended. Both were joined together in the charge you made against me when you saw I adhered to nothing, but was now as ready to declaim against the fair as I had been before to plead their cause, and defend the moral of lovers. This, you said, was my constant way in all debates: I was as well pleased with the reason on one side as on the other; I never troubled myself about the success of the argument, but laughed still, whatever way it went, and even when I convinced others, never seemed as if I was convinced myself.

I owned to you, Palemon, there was truth enough in your charge. For above all things I loved ease, and of all philosophers those who reasoned most at their ease, and were never angry or disturbed, as those called Sceptics, you owned, never were. I looked upon this kind of philosophy as the prettiest, agreeablest, roving exercise of the mind possible to be imagined. The other kind, I thought, was painful and laborious: "to keep always in the limits of one path, to drive always at a point, and hold precisely to what men at a venture called the Truth; a point, in all appearance, very unfixed and hard to ascertain." Besides, my way hurt nobody. I was always the first to comply on any occasion, and for matters of religion was farther from profaneness and erroneous doctrine than any one. I could never have the sufficiency to shock my spiritual and learned superiors. I was the farthest from leaning to my own understanding, nor was I one who exalted reason above faith, or insisted much upon what the dogmatical men call demonstration, and dare oppose to the sacred mysteries of religion. And to show you, continued I, how impossible it is for the men of our sort ever to err from the catholic and established faith, pray consider, that whereas others pretend to see with their own eyes what is properest and best for them in religion, we, for our parts, pretend not to see with any other than those of our spiritual guides. Neither do we presume to judge those guides ourselves, but submit to them as they are appointed us by our just superiors. In short, you who are rationalists, and walk by reason in everything, pretend to know all things, whilst you believe little or nothing. We, for our parts, know nothing and believe all.

Here I ended, and in return you only asked me coldly "whether with that fine scepticism of mine I made no more distinction between sincerity and insincerity in actions, than I did between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, in arguments?"

I durst not ask what your question drove at. I was afraid I saw it too plainly, and that by this loose way of talking, which I had learnt in some fashionable conversations of the world, I had given you occasion to suspect me of the worst sort of scepticism, such as spared nothing, but overthrew all principles, moral and divine.

Forgive me, said I, good Palemon; you are offended, I see, and not without cause. But what if I should endeavour to compensate my sceptical misbehaviour by using a known sceptic privilege, and asserting strenuously the cause I have hitherto opposed? Do not imagine that I dare aspire so high as to defend revealed religion, or the holy mysteries of the Christian faith. I am unworthy of such a task, and should profane the subject. 'Tis of mere philosophy I speak; and my fancy is only to try what I can muster up thence, to make head against the chief arguments of atheism, and re-establish what I have offered to loosen in the system of theism.

Your project, said you, bids fair to reconcile me to your character, which I was beginning to mistrust. For as averse as I am to the cause of theism, or name of Deist, when taken in a sense exclusive of revelation, I consider still that in strictness the root of all is theism, and that to be a settled Christian, it is necessary to be first of all a good theist; for theism can only be opposed to polytheism or atheism.[1] Nor have I patience to hear the name of Deist (the highest of all names) decried, and set in opposition to Christianity. "As if our religion was a kind of magic, which depended not on the belief of a single supreme Being. Or as if the firm and rational belief of such a Being on philosophical grounds was an improper qualification for believing anything further." Excellent presumption for those who naturally incline to the disbelief of revelation, or who through vanity affect a freedom of this kind! . . .

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[1] "To polytheism (daemonism) or atheism." *Inquiry,* part i. bk. i. § 2.

But let me hear, continued you, whether in good earnest and thorough sincerity you intend to advance anything in favour of that opinion which is fundamental to all religion, or whether you design only to divert yourself with the subject as you have done hitherto? "Whatever your thoughts are, Philocles, I am resolved to force them from you. You can no longer plead the unsuitableness of the time or place to such grave subjects. The gaudy scene is over with the day. Our company have long since quitted the field; and the solemn majesty of such a night as this, may justly suit with the profoundest meditation or most serious discourse."

Thus, Palemon, you continued to urge me, till by necessity I was drawn into the following vein of philosophical enthusiasm.

SECTION III

You shall find then, said I (taking a grave air), that it is possible for me to be serious, and that 'tis probable I am growing so for good and all. Your over-seriousness awhile since, at such an unseasonable time, may have driven me perhaps into a contrary extreme by opposition to your melancholy humour. But I have now a better idea of that melancholy you discovered, and notwithstanding the humorous turn you were pleased to give it, I am persuaded it has a different foundation from any of those fantastical causes I then assigned to it. "Love, doubtless, is at the bottom; but a nobler love than such as common beauties inspire."

Here, in my turn, I began to raise my voice, and imitate the solemn way you had been teaching me. "Knowing as you are," continued I, "well-knowing and experienced in all the degrees and orders of beauty, in all the mysterious charms of the particular forms, you rise to what is more general, and with a larger heart, and mind more comprehensive, you generously seek that which is highest in the kind. Not captivated by the lineaments of a fair face, or the well-drawn proportions of a human body, you view the life itself, and embrace rather the mind which adds the lustre, and renders chiefly amiable.

"Nor is the enjoyment of such a single beauty sufficient to satisfy such an aspiring soul. It seeks how to combine more beauties, and by what coalition of these to form a beautiful society. It views communities, friendships, relations, duties, and considers by what harmony of particular minds the general harmony is composed, and commonweal established.

"Nor satisfied even with public good in one community of men, it frames itself a nobler object, and with enlarged affection seeks the good of mankind. It dwells with pleasure amidst that reason and those orders on which this fair correspondence and goodly interest is established. Laws, constitutions, civil and religious rites; whatever civilises or polishes rude mankind; the sciences and arts, philosophy, morals, virtue; the flourishing state of human affairs, and the perfection of human nature; these are its delightful prospects, and this the charm of beauty which attracts it.

"Still ardent in this pursuit (such is its love of order and perfection) it rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection; wishing the best, and hoping still to find a just and wise administration.

"And since all hope of this were vain and idle if no universal mind presided; since without such a supreme intelligence and providential care the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities; 'tis here the generous mind labours to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things and the universal order happily sustained.

"This, Palemon, is the labour of your soul, and this its melancholy when, unsuccessfully pursuing the supreme beauty, it meets with darkening clouds which intercept its sight.

Monsters arise, not those from Lybian deserts, but from the heart of man more fertile, and with their horrid aspect cast an unseemly reflection upon Nature. She, helpless (as she is thought), and working thus absurdly, is contemned, the government of the world arraigned, and Deity made void.

"Much is alleged in answer to show why Nature errs, and how she came thus impotent and erring from an unerring hand. But I deny she errs; and when she seems most ignorant or perverse in her productions, I assert her even then as wise and provident as in her goodliest works. For 'tis not then that men complain of the world's order, or abhor the face of things, when they see various interests mixed and interfering; natures subordinate of different kinds, opposed one to another, and in their different operations submitted the higher to the lower. 'Tis on the contrary from this order of inferior and superior things that we admire the world's beauty,[1] founded thus on contrarieties, whilst from such various and disagreeing principles a universal concord is established.

"Thus in the several orders of terrestrial forms a resignation is required, a sacrifice and mutual yielding of natures one to another. The vegetables by their death sustain the animals, and animal bodies dissolved enrich the earth, and raise again the vegetable world. The numerous insects are reduced by the superior kinds of birds and beasts, and these again are checked by man, who in his turn submits to other natures, and resigns his form a sacrifice in common to the rest of things. And if in natures so little exalted or pre-eminent above each other, the sacrifice of interests can appear so just, how much more reasonably may all inferior natures be subjected to the superior nature of the world! that world, Palemon, which even now transported you when the sun's fainting light gave way to these bright constellations, and left you this wide system to contemplate.

"Here are those laws which ought not nor can submit to anything below. The central powers, which hold the lasting orbs in their just poise and movement, must not be controlled to save a fleeting form, and rescue from the precipice a puny animal, whose brittle frame, however protected, must of itself so soon dissolve. The ambient air, the inward vapours, the impending meteors, or whatever else is nutrimental or preservative of this earth, must operate in a natural course, and other constitutions must submit to the good habit and constitution of the all-sustaining globe.

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[1] See *Misc.* v. ch. i. what is cited in the notes from the ancient author on *The World*.

"Let us not therefore wonder if by earthquakes, storms, pestilential blasts, nether or upper fires, or floods, the animal kinds are oft afflicted, and whole species perhaps involved at once in common ruin; but much less let us account it strange if either by outward shock, or some interior wound from hostile matter, particular animals are deformed even in their first conception, when the disease invades the seats of generation, and seminal parts are injured and obstructed in their accurate labours. 'Tis then alone that monstrous shapes are seen: Nature still working as before, and not perversely or erroneously, not faintly, or with feeble endeavours; but overpowered by a superior rival, and by another nature's justly conquering force.

"Nor need we wonder if the interior form, the soul and temper, partakes of this occasional deformity, and sympathises often with its close partner. Who is there can wonder either at the sicknesses of sense, or the depravity of minds enclosed in such frail bodies, and dependent on such pervertible organs?

"Here then is that solution you require, and hence those seeming blemishes cast upon Nature. Nor is there aught in this beside what is natural and good. 'Tis good which is predominant; and every corruptible and mortal nature by its mortality and corruption yields only to some better, and all in common to that best and highest nature which is incorruptible and immortal."

"I scarce had ended these words ere you broke out in admiration, asking what had befallen me that of a sudden

I had thus changed my character, and entered into thoughts which must certainly, you supposed, have some foundation in me, since I could express them with such seeming affection as I had done.

O, said I, Palemon! that it had been my fortune to have met you the other day, just at my return out of the country from a friend whose conversation had in one day or two made such an impression on me that I should have suited you to a miracle. You would have thought indeed that I had been cured of my scepticism and levity, so as never to have rallied more at that wild rate on any subject, much less on these which are so serious.

Truly, said you, I could wish I had met you rather at that time, or that those good and serious impressions of your friend had without interruption lasted with you till this moment.

Whatever they were, I told you, Palemon, I had not so lost them neither as not easily, you saw, to revive them on occasion, were I not afraid. Afraid! said you. For whose sake, good Philocles, I entreat you? for mine or your own? For both, replied I. For though I was like to be perfectly cured of my scepticism, 'twas by what I thought worse, downright enthusiasm. You never knew a more agreeable enthusiast!

Were he my friend, said you, I should hardly treat him in so free a manner; nor should I, perhaps, judge that to be enthusiasm which you so freely term so. I have a strong suspicion that you injure him. Nor can I be satisfied till I hear further of that serious conversation for which you tax him as enthusiastic.

I must confess, said I, he had nothing of that savage air of the vulgar enthusiastic kind. All was serene, soft, and harmonious. The manner of it was more after the pleasing transports of those ancient poets you are often charmed with, than after the fierce unsociable way of modern zealots, those starched, gruff gentlemen, who guard religion as bullies do a mistress, and give us the while a very indifferent opinion of their lady's merit and their own wit, by adoring what they neither allow to be inspected by others nor care themselves to examine in a fair light. But here, I will answer for it, there was nothing of disguise or paint. All was fair, open, and genuine as Nature herself. 'Twas Nature he was in love with; 'twas Nature he sung. And if any one might be said to have a natural mistress my friend certainly might, whose heart was thus engaged. But love, I found, was everywhere the same. And though the object here was very fine, and the passion it created very noble, yet liberty, I thought, was finer than all; and I who never cared to engage in other love of the least continuance, was the more afraid, I told you, of this which had such a power with my poor friend as to make him appear the perfectest enthusiast in the world, ill-humour only excepted. For this was singular in him, "That though he had all of the enthusiast, he had nothing of the bigot. He heard everything with mildness and delight, and bore with me when I treated all his thoughts as visionary, and when, sceptic-like, I unravelled all his systems."

Here was that character and description which so highly pleased you that you would hardly suffer me to come to a conclusion. 'Twas impossible, I found, to give you satisfaction without reciting the main of what passed in those two days between my friend and me in our country retirement. Again and again I bid you beware: "you knew not the danger of this philosophical passion, nor considered what you might possibly draw upon yourself, and make me the author of. I was far enough engaged already, and you were pushing me further, at your own hazard."

All I could say made not the least impression on you. But rather than proceed any further this night, I engaged, for your sake, to turn writer, and draw up the memoirs of those two philosophical days, beginning with what had passed this last day between ourselves, as I have accordingly done, you see, by way of introduction to my story.

By this time, being got late to town, some hours after the latest of our company, you set me down at my own lodging, and thus we bade good-night.

PART II

Section I

Philocles to Palemon

After such a day as yesterday I might well have thought it hard, when I awaked the next morning, to find myself under positive engagements of proceeding in the same philosophical way without intermission, and upon harder terms than ever. For 'twas no longer the agreeable part of a companion which I had now to bear. Your conversation, Palemon, which had hitherto supported me, was at an end. I was now alone, confined to my closet, obliged to meditate by myself, and reduced to the hard circumstances of an author and historian in the most difficult subject.

But here, methought, propitious Heaven in some manner assisted me. For if dreams were, as Homer teaches, sent from the throne of Jove, I might conclude I had a favourable one of the true sort towards the morning light, which, as I recollected myself, gave me a clear and perfect idea of what I desired so earnestly to bring back to my memory.

I found myself transported to a distant country, which presented a pompous rural scene. It was a mountain not far from the sea, its brow adorned with ancient wood, and at its foot a river and well-inhabited plain, beyond which the sea appearing, closed the prospect.

No sooner had I considered the place than I discerned it to be the very same where I had talked with Theocles the second day I was with him in the country. I looked about to see if

I could find my friend, and calling Theocles! I awaked. But so powerful was the impression of my dream, and so perfect the idea raised in me of the person, words, and manner of my friend, that I could now fancy myself philosophically inspired, as that Roman sage[1] by his Egeria, and invited on this occasion to try my historical muse. For justly might I hope for such assistance in behalf of Theocles, who so loved the Muses, and was I thought no less beloved by them.

To return therefore to that original rural scene and that heroic genius, the companion and guide of my first thoughts in these profounder subjects; I found him the first morning with his beloved Mantuan Muse, roving in the fields, where, as I had been informed at his house, he was gone out, after his usual way, to read. The moment he saw me his book vanished, and he came with friendly haste to meet me. After we had embraced, I discovered my curiosity to know what he was reading, and asked "if it were of a secret kind, to which I could not be admitted." On this he showed me his poet, and looking pleasantly, Now tell me truly, said he, Philocles, did you not expect some more mysterious book than this? I owned I did, considering his character, which I took to be of so contemplative a kind. And do you think, said he, that without being contemplative, one can truly relish these diviner poets? Indeed, said I, I never thought there was any need of growing contemplative, or retiring from the world, to read Virgil or Horace.

You have named two, said he, who can hardly be thought so very like, though they were friends and equally good poets. Yet joining them as you are pleased to do, I would willingly learn from you whether in your opinion there be any disposition so fitted for reading them as that in which they writ themselves. In this, I am sure, they both joined heartily: to love retirement; when for the sake of such a life and habit as you call contemplative, they were willing to sacrifice the highest advantages, pleasures, and favour of a court. But I will venture to say more in favour of retirement: "that not only the best authors but the best company require this seasoning." Society itself cannot be rightly enjoyed without some abstinence and separate thought. All grows insipid, dull, and tiresome without the help of some intervals of retirement. Say, Philocles, whether you yourself have not often found it so? Do you think those lovers understand the interests of their loves who by their good-will would never be parted for a moment? or would they be discreet friends, think you, who would choose to live together on such terms? What relish then must the world have (that common world of mixed and undistinguished company) without a little solitude; without stepping now and then aside, out of the road and beaten track of life, that tedious circle of noise and show, which forces wearied mankind to seek relief from every poor diversion?

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[1] Numa.

By your rule, said I, Theocles, there should be no such thing as happiness or good in life, since every enjoyment wears out so soon; and growing painful, is diverted by some other thing, and that again by some other, and so on. I am sure, if solitude serves as a remedy or diversion to anything in the world, there is nothing which may not serve as diversion to solitude, which wants it more than anything besides. And thus there can be no good which is regular or constant. Happiness is a thing out of the way, and only to be found in wandering.

O Philocles, replied he, I rejoice to find you in the pursuit of happiness and good, however you may wander. Nay, though you doubt whether there be that thing, yet if you reason, 'tis sufficient; there is hope still. But see how you have unawares engaged yourself! For if you have destroyed all good, because in all you can think of there is nothing will constantly hold so; then you have set it as a maxim (and very justly in my opinion) "that nothing can be good but what is constant."

I own, said I, that all I know of worldly satisfaction is inconstant. The things which give it are never at a stay, and the good itself, whatever it be, depends no less on humour than on fortune. For that which Chance may often spare, Time will not. Age, change of temper, other thoughts, a different passion, new engagements, a new turn of life, or conversation,—the least of these are fatal, and alone sufficient to destroy enjoyment. Though the object be the same, the relish changes and the short-lived good expires. But I should wonder much if you could tell me anything in life which was not of as changeable a nature, and subject to the same common fate of satiety and disgust.

I find then, replied he, that the current notion of good is not sufficient to satisfy you. You can afford to scepticise where no one else will so much as hesitate; for almost every one philosophises dogmatically on this head. All are positive in this, "that our real good is pleasure."

If they would inform us "which," said I, "or what sort," and ascertain once the very species and distinct kind, such as must constantly remain the same, and equally eligible at all times, I should then perhaps be better satisfied. But when will and pleasure are synonymous; when everything which pleases us is called pleasure,[1] and we never choose or prefer but as we please; 'tis trifling to say "Pleasure is our good." For this has as little meaning as to say, "We choose what we think eligible"; and "We are pleased with what delights or pleases us." The question is "whether we are rightly pleased, and choose as we should do?" For as highly pleased as children are with baubles, or with whatever affects their tender senses, we cannot in our hearts sincerely admire their enjoyment, or imagine them possessors of any extraordinary good. Yet are their senses, we know, as keen and susceptible of pleasure as our own. The same reflection is of force as to mere animals, who in respect of the liveliness and delicacy of sensation have many of them the advantage of us. And as for some low and sordid pleasures of human kind, should they be ever so lastingly enjoyed, and in the highest credit with their enjoyers, I should never afford them the name of happiness or good.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part iii. § ii.; *Misc.* IV. ch. i.

Would you then appeal, said he, from the immediate feeling and experience of one who is pleased and satisfied with what he enjoys?

Most certainly I should appeal, said I (continuing the same zeal which Theocles had stirred in me, against those dogmatisers on pleasure). For is there that sordid creature on earth who does not prize his own enjoyment? Does not the forwardest, the most rancorous distempered creature do as much? Is not malice and cruelty of the highest relish with some natures? Is not a hoggish life the height of some men's wishes? You would not ask me surely to enumerate the several species of sensations which men of certain tastes have adopted, and owned for their chief pleasure and delight. For with some men even diseases have been thought valuable and worth the cherishing, merely for the pleasure found in allaying the ardour of an irritating sensation. And to these absurd epicures those other are near akin who by studied provocatives raise unnatural thirst and appetite, and, to make way for fresh repletion, prepare emetics, as the last dessert, the sooner to renew the feast. 'Tis said, I know, proverbially, "that tastes are different, and must not be disputed." And I remember some such motto as this placed once on a device, which was found suitable to the notion. A fly was represented feeding on a certain lump. The food, however vile, was natural to the animal. There was no absurdity in the case. But should you show me a brutish or a barbarous man thus taken up, and solaced in his pleasure; should you show me a sot in his solitary debauch, or a tyrant in the exercise of his cruelty, with this motto over him, to forbid my appeal; I should hardly be brought to think the better of his enjoyment; nor can I possibly suppose that a mere sordid wretch, with a base, abject soul, and the best fortune in the world, was ever capable of any real enjoyment.

By this zeal, replied Theocles, which you have shown in the refuting a wrong hypothesis, one would imagine you had in reality some notion of a right, and began to think that there might possibly be such a thing at last as good.

That there is something nearer to good, and more like it than another, I am free, said I, to own. But what real good is I am still to seek, and must therefore wait till you can better inform me. This I only know, "that either all pleasure is good, or only some." If all, then every kind of sensuality must be precious and desirable. If some only, then we are to seek what kind, and discover, if we can, what it is which distinguishes between one pleasure and another, and makes one indifferent, sorry, mean; another valuable and worthy. And by this stamp, this character, if there be any such, we must define good, and not by pleasure itself, which may be very great and yet very contemptible. Nor can any one truly judge the value of any immediate sensation otherwise than by judging first of the situation of his own mind. For that which we esteem a happiness in one situation of mind is otherwise thought of in another. Which situation therefore is the justest must be considered: "how to gain that point of sight whence probably we may best discern; and how to place ourselves in that unbiassed state in which we are fittest to pronounce."

O Philocles, replied he, if this be unfeignedly your sentiment, if it be possible you should have the fortitude to withhold your assent in this affair,[1] and go in search of what the meanest of mankind think they already know so certainly, 'tis from a nobler turn of thought than what you have observed in any of the modern sceptics you have conversed with. For if I mistake not, there are hardly anywhere at this day a sort of people more peremptory, or who deliberate less on the choice of good. They who pretend to such a scrutiny of other evidences are the readiest to take the evidence of the greatest deceivers in the world, their own passions. Having gained, as they think, a liberty from some seeming constraints of religion, they suppose they employ this liberty to perfection by following the first motion of their will, and assenting to the first dictate or report of any prepossessing fancy,[1] any foremost opinion or conceit of good. So that their privilege is only that of being perpetually amused, and their liberty that of being imposed on in their most important choice. I think one may say with assurance "that the greatest of fools is he who imposes on himself, and in his greatest concern thinks certainly he knows that which he has least studied, and of which he is most profoundly ignorant. He who is ignorant but knows his ignorance, is far wiser. And to do justice to these fashionable men of wit, they are not all of them, indeed, so insensible as not to perceive something of their own blindness and absurdity. For often when they seriously reflect on their past pursuits and engagements they freely own "that for what remains of life they know not whether they shall be of a piece with themselves, or whether their fancy, humour, or passion will not hereafter lead them to a quite different choice in pleasure, and to a disapprobation of all they ever enjoyed before." . . . . Comfortable reflection!

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[1] *Essay on Wit and Humour,* part i. § 6.

To bring the satisfactions of the mind, continued he, and the enjoyments of reason and judgment under the denomination of PLEASURE, is only a collusion, and a plain receding from the common notion of the word. They deal not fairly with us who in their philosophical hour admit that for pleasure which at an ordinary time, and in the common practice of life, is so little taken for such. The mathematician who labours at his problem, the bookish man who toils, the artist who endures voluntarily the greatest hardships and fatigues,—none of these are said "to follow pleasure." Nor will the men of pleasure by any means admit them to be of their number. The satisfactions which are purely mental, and depend only on the motion of a thought, must in all likelihood be too refined for the apprehensions of our modern epicures, who are so taken up with pleasure of a more substantial kind. They who are full of the idea of such a sensible solid good can have but a slender fancy for the mere spiritual and intellectual sort. But 'tis this latter they set up and magnify upon occasion, to save the ignominy which may redound to them from the former. This done, the latter may take its chance: its use is presently at an end. For 'tis observable that when the men of this sort have recommended the enjoyments of the mind under the title of pleasure, when they have thus dignified the word, and included in it whatever is mentally good or excellent, they can afterwards suffer it contentedly to slide down again into its own genuine and vulgar sense, whence they raised it only to serve a turn. When pleasure is called in question and attacked, then reason and virtue are called in to her aid, and made principal parts of her constitution. A complicated form appears, and comprehends straight all which is generous, honest, and beautiful in human life. But when the attack is over, and the objection once solved, the spectre vanishes; pleasure returns again to her former shape; she may even be pleasure still, and have as little concern with dry, sober reason as in the nature of the thing and according to common understanding she really has. For if this rational sort of enjoyment be admitted into the notion of good, how is it possible to admit withal that kind of sensation which in effect is rather opposite to this enjoyment? 'Tis certain that in respect of the mind and its enjoyments, the eagerness and irritation of mere pleasure is as disturbing as the importunity and vexation of pain. If either throws the mind off its bias, and deprives it of the satisfaction it takes in its natural exercise and employment, the mind in this case must be sufferer as well by one as by the other. If neither does this, there is no harm on either side. . . .

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part iii. § 2.

By the way, said I, interrupting him, as sincere as I am in questioning "whether pleasure be really good," I am not such a sceptic as to doubt "whether pain be really ill."

Whatever is grievous, replied he, can be no other than ill. But that what is grievous to one, is not so much as troublesome to another, let sportsmen, soldiers, and others of the hardy kinds be witness. Nay, that what is pain to one is pleasure to another, and so alternately, we very well know, since men vary in their apprehension of these sensations, and on many occasions confound one with the other. Has not even Nature herself in some respects, as it were, blended them together, and (as a wise man said once) "joined the extremity of one so nicely to the other, that it absolutely runs into it and is indistinguishable"?

In fine then, said I, if pleasure and pain be thus convertible and mixed; if, according to your account, "that which is now pleasure, by being strained a little too far, runs into pain, and pain, when carried far, creates again the highest pleasure, by mere cessation and a kind of natural succession; if some pleasures to some are pains, and some pains to others are pleasures"; all this, if I mistake not, makes still for my opinion, and shows that there is nothing you can assign which can really stand as good. For if pleasure be not good, nothing is. And if pain be ill (as I must necessarily take for granted) we have a shrewd chance on the ill side indeed, but none at all on the better. So that we may fairly doubt "whether life itself be not mere misery," since gainers by it we can never be; losers we may sufficiently, and are like to be every hour of our lives. Accordingly, what our English poetess says of good should be just and proper, "'Tis good not to be born." . . . And thus for anything of good which can be expected in life, we may e'en "beg pardon of Nature, and return her present on her hands without waiting for her call." For what should hinder us? or what are we the better for living?

The query, said he, is pertinent. But why such dispatch if the case be doubtful? This, surely, my good Philocles! is a plain transgression of your sceptical bounds. We must be sufficiently dogmatical to come to this determination. 'Tis a deciding as well concerning death as life, "what possibly may be hereafter, and what not." Now to be assured that we can never be concerned in anything hereafter, we must understand perfectly what it is which concerns or engages us in anything present. We must truly know ourselves, and in what this self of ours consists. We must determine against pre-existence, and give a better reason for our having never been concerned in aught before our birth than merely "because we remember not, nor are conscious." For in many things we have been concerned to purpose, of which we have now no memory or consciousness remaining. And thus we may happen to be again and again to perpetuity, for any reason we can show to the contrary. All is revolution in us. We are no more the selfsame matter or system of matter from one day to another. What succession there may be hereafter we know not, since even now we live by succession, and only perish and are renewed. 'Tis in vain we flatter ourselves with the assurance of our interests ending with a certain shape or form. What interested us at first in it we know not, any more than how we have since held on, and continue still concerned in such an assemblage of fleeting particles. Where besides or in what else we may have to do, perchance, in time to come, we know as little, nor can tell how chance or providence hereafter may dispose of us. And if providence be in the case, we have still more reason to consider how we undertake to be our own disposers. It must needs become a sceptic above all men to hesitate in matters of exchange. And though he acknowledges no present good or enjoyment in life, he must be sure, however, of bettering his condition before he attempts to alter it. But as yet, Philocles, even this point remains undetermined between us: "whether in this present life there be not such a thing as real good."

Be you therefore, said I, my instructor, sagacious Theocles! and inform me "what that good is, or where, which can afford contentment and satisfaction always alike, without variation or diminution." For though on some occasions and in some subjects the mind may possibly be so bent, and the passion so wrought up, that for the time no bodily sufferance or pain can alter it, yet this is what can seldom happen, and is unlikely to last long, since without any pain or inconvenience, the passion in a little time does its own work, the mind relaxes with its bent, and the temper wearied with repetition finds no more enjoyment, but runs to something new.

Hear then! said Theocles. For though I pretend not to tell you at once the nature of this which I call good, yet I am content to show you something of it in yourself, which you will acknowledge to be naturally more fixed and constant than anything you have hitherto thought on. Tell me, my friend, if ever you were weary of doing good to those you loved? Say when you ever found it unpleasing to serve a friend? or whether when you first proved this generous pleasure you did not feel it less than at this present, after so long experience? Believe me, Philocles, this pleasure is more debauching than any other. Never did any soul do good, but it came readier to do the same again with more enjoyment. Never was love, or gratitude, or bounty practised but with increasing joy, which made the practiser still more in love with the fair act. Answer me, Philocles, you who are such a judge of beauty, and have so good a taste of pleasure, is there anything you admire so fair as friendship? or anything so charming as a generous action? What would it be, therefore, if all life were in reality but one continued friendship, and could be made one such entire act? Here surely would be that fixed and constant good you sought. Or would you look for anything beyond?

Perhaps not, said I. But I can never, surely, go beyond this to seek for a chimera, if this good of yours be not thoroughly chimerical. For though a poet may possibly work up such a single action, so as to hold a play out, I can conceive but very faintly how this high strain of friendship can be so managed as to fill a life. Nor can I imagine where the object lies of such a sublime, heroic passion.

Can any friendship, said he, be so heroic as that towards mankind? Do you think the love of friends in general and of one's country to be nothing? or that particular friendship can well subsist without such an enlarged affection and sense of obligation to society? Say, if possible, you are a friend, but hate your country. Say, you are true to the interest of a companion, but false to that of society. Can you believe yourself? or will you lay the name aside, and refuse to be called the friend, since you renounce the man?

That there is something, said I, due to mankind, is what I think will not be disputed by one who claims the name of friend. Hardly indeed could I allow the name of man to one who never could call or be called friend. But he who justly proves himself a friend is man enough, nor is he wanting to society. A single friendship may acquit him. He has deserved a friend, and is man's friend, though not in strictness, or according to your high moral sense, the friend of mankind. For to say truth, as to this sort of friendship it may by wiser heads be esteemed perhaps more than ordinarily manly, and even heroic, as you assert it; but for my part I see so very little worth in mankind, and have so indifferent an opinion of the public, that I can propose little satisfaction to myself in loving either.

Do you, then, take bounty and gratitude to be among the acts of friendship and good-nature? Undoubtedly, for they are the chief. Suppose then that the obliged person discovers in the obliger several failings; does this exclude the gratitude of the former? Not in the least. Or does it make the exercise of gratitude less pleasing? I think rather the contrary. For when deprived of other means of making a return, I might rejoice still in that sure way of showing my gratitude to my benefactor by bearing his failings as a friend. And as to bounty: tell me, I beseech you, is it to those only who are deserving that we should do good? Is it only to a good neighbour or relation, a good father, child, or brother? Or does Nature, reason, and humanity better teach us to do good still to a father because a father, and to a child because a child, and so to every relation in human life? I think, said I, this last is rightest.

O Philocles, replied he, consider then what it was you said when you objected against the love of mankind because of human frailty, and seemed to scorn the public because of its misfortunes. See if this sentiment be consistent with that humanity which elsewhere you own and practise. For where can generosity exist if not here? Where can we ever exert friendship, if not in this chief subject? To what should we be true or grateful in the world if not to mankind and that society to which we are so deeply indebted? What are the faults or blemishes which can excuse such an omission, or in a grateful mind can ever lessen the satisfaction of making a grateful, kind return? Can you then out of good-breeding merely, and from a temper natural to you, rejoice to show civility, courteousness, obligingness, seek objects of compassion, and be pleased with every occurrence where you have power to do some service even to people unknown? Can you delight in such adventures abroad in foreign countries, or in the case of strangers here at home: to help, assist, relieve all who require it, in the most hospitable, kind, and friendly manner? And can your country or, what is more, your kind, require less kindness from you, or deserve less to be considered, than even one of these chance creatures? O Philocles! how little do you know the extent and power of good-nature, and to what an heroic pitch a soul may rise which knows the thorough force of it, and distributing it rightly, frames in itself an equal, just, and universal friendship!

Just as he had ended these words, a servant came to us in the field to give notice of some company who were come to dine with us, and waited our coming in. So we walked homewards. I told Theocles, going along, that I feared I should never make a good friend or lover after his way. As for a plain natural love of one single person in either sex, I could compass it, I thought, well enough; but this complex, universal sort was beyond my reach. I could love the individual, but not the species. This was too mysterious, too metaphysical an object for me. In short, I could love nothing of which I had not some sensible, material image.

How! replied Theocles, can you never love except in this manner? when yet I know that you admired and loved a friend long ere you knew his person. Or was Palemon's character of no force when it engaged you in that long correspondence which preceded your late personal acquaintance? The fact, said I, I must of necessity own to you. And now, methinks, I understand your mystery, and perceive how I must prepare for it; for in the same manner as when I first began to love Palemon, I was forced to form a kind of material object, and had always such a certain image of him ready drawn in my mind whenever I thought of him; so I must endeavour to order it in the case before us, if possibly by your help I can raise any such image or spectre as may represent this odd being you would have me love.

Methinks, said he, you might have the same indulgence for Nature or Mankind as for the people of old Rome, whom, notwithstanding their blemishes, I have known you in love with many ways, particularly under the representation of a beautiful youth called the Genius of the People. For I remember that, viewing once some pieces of antiquity where the people were thus represented, you allowed them to be no disagreeable object.

Indeed, replied I, were it possible for me to stamp upon my mind such a figure as you speak of, whether it stood for Mankind or Nature, it might probably have its effect, and I might become perhaps a lover after your way; but more especially if you could so order it as to make things reciprocal between us, and bring me to fancy of this genius that it could be "sensible of my love, and capable of a return." For without this I should make but an ill lover, though of the perfectest beauty in the world.

'Tis enough, said Theocles, I accept the terms, and if you promise to love, I will endeavour to show you that beauty which I count the perfectest, and most deserving of love, and which will not fail of a return. . . . To-morrow, when the eastern sun (as poets describe) with his first beams adorns the front of yonder hill, there, if you are content to wander with me in the woods you see, we will pursue those loves of ours by favour of the sylvan nymphs; and invoking first the genius of the place, we will try to obtain at least some faint and distant view of the sovereign genius and first beauty. This if you can come once to contemplate, I will answer for it that all those forbidding features and deformities, whether of Nature or Mankind, will vanish in an instant, and leave you that love I could wish. But now, enough! . . . Let us to our company, and change this conversation for some other more suitable to our friends and table.

SECTION II

YOU see here, Palemon, what a foundation is laid for the enthusiasms I told you of, and which, in my opinion (I told you too), were the more dangerous, because so very odd and out of the way. But curiosity had seized you, I perceived, as it had done me before. For after this first conversation I must own I longed for nothing so much as the next day, and the appointed morning walk in the woods.

We had only a friend or two at dinner with us, and for a good while we discoursed of news and indifferent things, till I, who had my head still running upon those other subjects, gladly laid hold of something dropt by chance concerning friendship, and said that for my own part, truly, though I once thought I had known friendship, and really counted myself a good friend during my whole life, yet I was now persuaded to believe myself no better than a learner, since Theocles had almost convinced me "that to be a friend to any one in particular, 'twas necessary to be first a friend to mankind." But how to qualify myself for such a friendship was, methought, no little difficulty.

Indeed, said Theocles, you have given us a very indifferent character of yourself in saying so. If you had spoken thus of the friendship of any great man at court, or perhaps of a court itself, and had complained "how hard it was for you to succeed, or make interest with such as governed there," we should have concluded in your behalf that there were such terms to be complied with as were unworthy of you. But "to deserve well of the public," and "to be justly styled the friend of mankind," requires no more than to be good and virtuous; terms which for one's own sake one would naturally covet.

How comes it then, said I, that even these good terms themselves are so ill accepted, and hardly ever taken (if I may so express it) except on further terms? For virtue by itself is thought but an ill bargain; and I know few, even of the religious and devout, who take up with it any otherwise than as children do with physic; where the rod and sweetmeat are the potent motives.

They are children indeed, replied Theocles, and should be treated so, who need any force or persuasion to do what conduces to their health and good. But where, I beseech you, are those forbidding circumstances which should make virtue go down so hardly? Is it not among other things that you think yourself by this means precluded the fine tables and costly eating of our modern epicures, and that perhaps you fear the being reduced to eat always as ill as now, upon a plain dish or two and no more?

This, I protested, was injuriously supposed of me. For I wished never to eat otherwise than I now did at his table, which, by the way, had more resemblance, I thought, of Epicurus's, than those which nowadays preposterously passed under his name. For if his opinion might be taken, the highest pleasures in the world were owing to temperance and moderate use.

If then the merest studier of pleasure, answered Theocles, even Epicurus himself, made that favourable report of temperance, so different from his modern disciples; if he could boldly say "that with such fare as a mean garden afforded, he could vie even with the gods for happiness"; how shall we say of this part of virtue that it needs be taken upon terms? If the immediate practice of temperance be thus harmless, are its consequences injurious? Does it take from the vigour of the mind, consume the body, and render both the one and the other less apt to their proper exercises, "the enjoyments of reason or sense, or the employments and offices of civil life"? Or is it that a man's circumstances are the worse for it, as he stands towards his friends or mankind? Is a gentleman in this sense to be pitied "as one burdensome to himself and others; one whom all men will naturally shun as an ill friend and a corrupter of society and good manners"? . . . Shall we consider our gentleman in a public trust, and see whether he is like to succeed best with this restraining quality, or whether he may be more relied on, and thought more incorrupt, if his appetites are high, and his relish strong towards that which we call pleasure? Shall we consider him as a soldier in a campaign or siege, and advise with ourselves how we might be best defended, if we had occasion for such a one's service? "Which officer would make the best for the soldiers, which soldier for the officers, or which army for their country?" . . . What think you of our gentleman for a fellow-traveller? Would he, as a temperate man, be an ill choice? Would it indeed be more eligible and delightful "to have a companion who, in any shift or necessity, would prove the most ravenous, and eager to provide in the first place for himself, and his own exquisite sensations"? . . . I know not what to say where beauty is concerned. Perhaps the amorous *galants* and exquisite refiners on this sort of pleasure may have so refined their minds and tempers that, notwithstanding their accustomed indulgence, they can upon occasion renounce their enjoyment rather than violate honour, faith, or justice. . . . And thus at last there will be little virtue or worth ascribed to this patient, sober character. "The dull, temperate man is no fitter to be trusted than the elegant, luxurious one. Innocence, youth, and fortune may be as well committed to the care of this latter gentleman. He would prove as good an executor, as good a trustee, as good a guardian, as he would a friend. The family which entrusted him would be secure, and no dishonour in any likelihood would happen from the honest man of pleasure."

The seriousness with which Theocles spoke this, made it the more pleasant, and set our other company upon saying a great many good things on the same subject in commendation of a temperate life. So that our dinner by this time being ended, and the wine, according to custom, placed before us, I found still we were in no likelihood of proceeding to a debauch. Every one drank only as he fancied, in no order or proportion, and with no regard to circular healths or pledges. A manner which the sociable men of another scheme of morals would have censured no doubt as a heinous irregularity and corruption of good fellowship.

I own, said I, I am far from thinking temperance so disagreeable a character. As for this part of virtue, I think there is no need of taking it on any other terms to recommend it than the mere advantage of being saved from intemperance, and from the desire of things unnecessary.

How, said Theocles, are you thus far advanced? And can you carry this temperance so far as to estates and honours by opposing it to avarice and ambition? Nay, then truly you may be said to have fairly embarked yourself in this cause. You have passed the channel, and are more than half-seas over. There remains no further scruple in the case of virtue unless you will declare yourself a coward, or conclude it a happiness to be born one. For if you can be temperate withal towards life, and think it not so great a business whether it be of fewer or more years; but, satisfied with what you have lived, can rise a thankful guest from a full, liberal entertainment, is not this the sum of all? the finishing stroke and very accomplishment of virtue? In this temper of mind what is there can hinder us from forming for ourselves as heroic a character as we please? What is there either good, generous, or great, which does not naturally flow from such a modest temperance? Let us once gain this simple, plain-looked virtue, and see whether the more shining virtues will not follow. See what that country of the mind will produce, when by the wholesome laws of this legislatress it has obtained its liberty! You, Philocles, who are such an admirer of civil liberty, and can represent it to yourself with a thousand several graces and advantages; can you imagine no grace or beauty in that original, native liberty which sets us free from so many inborn tyrannies, gives us the privilege of ourselves, and makes us our own and independent? A sort of property which, methinks, is as material to us to the full as that which secures us our lands or revenues.

I should think, said he (carrying on his humour), that one might draw the picture of this moral dame to as much advantage as that of her political sister, whom you admire, as described to us "in her Amazon-dress, with a free, manly air becoming her; her guards the laws, with their written tables, like bucklers, surrounding her; riches, traffic, and plenty, with the cornucopia, serving as her attendants; and in her train the arts and sciences, like children, playing." . . . The rest of the piece is easy to imagine: "her triumph over tyranny, and lawless rule of lust and passion." . . . But what a triumph would her sister's be! what monsters of savage passions would there appear subdued! "There fierce ambition, lust, uproar, misrule, with all the fiends which rage in human breasts, would be securely chained. And when fortune herself, the queen of flatteries, with that prince of terrors, death, were at the chariot-wheels as captives, how natural would it be to see fortitude, magnanimity, justice, honour, and all that generous band attend as the companions of our inmate Lady Liberty! She, like some new-born goddess, would grace her mother's chariot, and own her birth from humble temperance, that nursing mother of the virtues, who like the parent of the gods (old reverend Cybele) would properly appear drawn by reined lions, patient of the bit, and on her head a turret-like attire, the image of defensive power and strength of mind."

By this picture Theocles, I found, had given entertainment to the company, who, from this rough draught of his, fell to designing upon the same subject after the ancient manner, till Prodicus and Cebes and all the ancients were exhausted.

Gentlemen, said I, the descriptions you have been making are, no doubt, the finest in the world; but after all, when you have made virtue as glorious and triumphant as you please, I will bring you an authentic picture of another kind, where we shall see this triumph in reverse: "Virtue herself a captive in her turn; and by a proud conqueror triumphed over, degraded, spoiled of all her honours, and defaced, so as to retain hardly one single feature of real beauty."

I offered to go on further, but could not, being so violently decried by my two fellow-guests, who protested they would never be brought to own so detestable a picture; and one of them (a formal sort of gentleman, somewhat advanced in years) looking earnestly upon me, said, in an angry tone, "that he had hitherto, indeed, conceived some hopes of me, notwithstanding he observed my freedom of thought, and heard me quoted for such a passionate lover of liberty; but he was sorry to find that my principle of liberty extended in fine to a liberty from all principles" (so he expressed himself), "and none," he thought, "beside a libertine in principle would approve of such a picture of virtue as only an atheist could have the impudence to make."

Theocles the while sat silent, though he saw I minded not my antagonists, but kept my eye fixed steadily on himself, expecting to hear what he would say. At last, fetching a deep sigh, O Philocles, said he, how well you are master of that cause you have taken on you to defend! How well you know the way to gain advantage to the worst of causes from the imprudent management of those who defend the best! I dare not, for my own share, affirm to you, as my worthy friends have done, "that 'tis the atheist alone can lay this load on Virtue, and picture her thus disgracefully." No. There are other over-officious and less suspected hands, which do her perhaps more injury, though with a better colour.

That virtue should, with any show of reason, be made a victim (continued he, turning himself to his guests) must have appeared strange to you, no doubt, to hear asserted with such assurance as has been done by Philocles. You could conceive no tolerable ground for such a spectacle. In this reversed triumph you expected perhaps to see some foreign conqueror exalted; as either vice itself, or pleasure, wit, spurious philosophy, or some false image of truth or Nature. Little were you aware that the cruel enemy opposed to virtue should be religion itself! But you will call to mind that even innocently, and without any treacherous design, virtue is often treated so by those who would magnify to the utmost the corruption of man's heart; and in exposing, as they pretend, the falsehood of human virtue, think to extol religion. How many religious authors, how many sacred orators, turn all their edge this way, and strike at moral virtue as a kind of step-dame, or rival to religion! "Morality must not be named; Nature has no pretence; reason is an enemy; common justice, folly; and virtue, misery. Who would not be vicious had he his choice? Who would forbear but because he must? Or who would value virtue but for hereafter?"[1]

Truly, said the old gentleman (interrupting him), if this be the triumph of religion, 'tis such as her greatest enemy, I believe, would scarce deny her; and I must still be of opinion (with Philocles's leave) that it is no great sign of tenderness for religion to be so zealous in honouring her at the cost of virtue.

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[1] *Misc.* v. ch. iii.

Perhaps so, said I. Yet that there are many such zealots in the world you will acknowledge. And that there is a certain harmony between this zeal and what you call atheism, Theocles, you hear, has allowed. But let us hear him out, if perhaps he will be so free as to discover to us what he thinks of the generality of our religious writers, and their method of encountering their common enemy, the atheist. This is a subject which possibly may need a better clearing. For 'tis notorious that the chief opposers of atheism write upon contrary principles to one another, so as in a manner to confute themselves. Some of them hold zealously for virtue, and are realists in the point. Others, one may say, are only nominal moralists, by making virtue nothing in itself, a creature of will only, or a mere name of fashion. 'Tis the same in natural philosophy: some take one hypothesis and some another. I should be glad to discover once the true foundation, and distinguish those who effectually refute their other antagonists as well as the atheists, and rightly assert the joint cause of virtue and religion.

Here, Palemon, I had my wish. For by degrees I engaged Theocles to discover himself fully upon these subjects, which served as a prelude to those we were to engage in the next morning, for the approach of which I so impatiently longed. If his speculations proved of a rational kind, this previous discourse, I knew, would help me to comprehend them; if only pleasing fancies, this would help me, however, to please myself the better with them.

Here then began his criticism of authors, which grew by degrees into a continued discourse. So that had this been at a university, Theocles might very well have passed for some grave divinity professor, or teacher of ethics, reading an afternoon lecture to his pupils.

Section III

It would be undoubtedly, said he, a happy cause which could have the benefit of such managers as should never give their adversaries any handle of advantage against it. I could wish that in the cause of religion we had reason to boast as much. But since 'tis not impossible to write ill even in the best of causes, I am inclined to think this great one of religion may have run at least an equal hazard with any other, since they who write in defence of it are apt generally to use so much the less caution as they are more exempt from the fear of censure or criticism in their own person. Their adversary is well secured and silenced to their hand. They may safely provoke him to a field where he cannot appear openly, or as a professed antagonist. His weapons are private, and can often reach the cause without offence to its maintainers, whilst no direct attack robs them of their imaginary victory. They conquer for themselves, and expect to be approved still for their zeal, however the cause itself may have suffered in their hands.

Perhaps then, said I (interrupting him), it may be true enough what was said once by a person who seemed zealous for religion, "that none writ well against the atheists beside the clerk who drew the warrant for their execution."

If this were the true writing, replied he, there would be an end of all dispute or reasoning in the case. For where force is necessary, reason has nothing to do. But on the other hand, if reason be needful, force in the meanwhile must be laid aside; for there is no enforcement of reason but by reason. And therefore if atheists are to be reasoned with at all, they are to be reasoned with like other men, since there is no other way in Nature to convince them.

This I own, said I, seems rational and just, but I am afraid that most of the devout people will be found ready to abandon the patient for the more concise method. And though force without reason may be thought somewhat hard, yet your other way of reason without force, I am apt to think, would meet with fewer admirers.

But perhaps, replied Theocles, 'tis a mere sound which troubles us. The word or name of atheist may possibly occasion some disturbance, by being made to describe two characters so very different as his who absolutely denies and his who only doubts. Now he who doubts may possibly lament his own unhappiness and wish to be convinced. He who denies is daringly presumptuous, and sets up an opinion against the interest of mankind and being of society. 'Tis easily seen that one of these persons may bear a due respect to the magistrate and laws, though not the other, who being obnoxious to them is therefore punishable. But how the former is punishable by man will be hard to say, unless the magistrate had dominion over minds, as well as over actions and behaviour, and had power to exercise an inquisition within the inmost bosoms and secret thoughts of men.

I apprehend you, said I. And by your account, as there are two sorts of people who are called atheists, so there are two ways of writing against them, which may be fitly used apart, but not so well jointly. You would set aside mere menaces and separate the philosopher's work from the magistrate's, taking it for granted that the more discreet and sober part of unbelievers, who come not under the dispatching pen of the magistrate, can be affected only by the more deliberate and gentle one of philosophy. Now the language of the magistrate, I must confess, has little in common with that of philosophy. Nothing can be more unbecoming the magisterial authority than a philosophical style, and nothing can be more unphilosophical than a magisterial one. A mixture of these must needs spoil both. And therefore, in the cause before us, "if any one besides the magistrate can be said to write well, 'tis he (according to your account) who writes as becomes philosophy, with freedom of debate, and fairness towards his adversary."

Allow it, replied he. For what can be more equitable? Nothing. But will the world be of the same opinion? And may this method of writing be justly practised in it? Undoubtedly it may. And for a proof we have many instances in antiquity to produce. The freedom taken in this philosophical way was never esteemed injurious to religion or prejudicial to the vulgar, since we find it to have been a practice both in writing and converse among the great men of a virtuous and religious people; and that even those magistrates who officiated at the altars, and were the guardians of the public worship, were sharers in these free debates.

Forgive me, Theocles, said I, if I presume to say that still this reaches not the case before us. We are to consider Christian times such as are now present. You know the common fate of those who dare to appear fair authors. What was that pious and learned man's case who wrote *The Intellectual System of the Universe?*[1] I confess it was pleasant enough to consider that though the whole world were no less satisfied with his capacity and learning than with his sincerity in the cause of Deity, yet was he accused of giving the upper hand to the atheists for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together. And among other writings of this kind you may remember how a certain fair *Inquiry*[2] (as you called it) was received and what offence was taken at it.

I am sorry, said Theocles, it proved so. But now indeed you have found a way which may, perhaps, force me to discourse at large with you on this head, by entering the lists in defence of a friend unjustly censured for this philosophical liberty.

I confessed to Theocles and the company that this had really been my aim, and that for this reason alone I made myself the accuser of this author, "whom I here actually charged, as I did all those other moderate calm writers, with no less than profaneness, for reasoning so unconcernedly and patiently, without the least show of zeal or passion, upon the subject of a Deity and a future state."

And I, on the other side, replied Theocles, am rather for this patient way of reasoning, and will endeavour to clear my friend of this imputation, if you can have patience enough to hear me out in an affair of such a compass.

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[1] [Cudworth.]

[2] [*I.e.* Shaftesbury's early essay, printed above.]

We all answered for ourselves, and he began thus:—

Of the many writers engaged in the defence of religion, it seems to me that the greatest part are employed either in supporting the truth of the Christian Faith in general, or in refuting such particular doctrines as are esteemed innovations in the Christian Church. There are not, 'tis thought, many persons in the world who are loose in the very grounds and principles of all religion; and to such as these we find, indeed, there are not many writers who purposely apply themselves. They may think it a mean labour, and scarce becoming them, to argue sedately with such as are almost universally treated with detestation and horror. But as we are required by our religion to have charity for all men, so we cannot surely avoid having a real concern for those whom we apprehend to be under the worst of errors, and whom we find by experience to be with the greatest difficulty reclaimed. Neither ought they perhaps in prudence to be treated with so little regard whose number, however small, is thought to be rather increasing, and this, too, among the people of no despicable rank. So that it may well deserve some consideration "whether in our age and country the same remedies may serve which have hitherto been tried, or whether some other may not be preferred, as being suitable to times of less strictness in matters of religion and places less subject to authority."

This might be enough to put an author upon thinking of such a way of reasoning with these deluded persons, as in his opinion might be more effectual for their benefit, than the repeated exclamations and invectives with which most of the arguments used against them are commonly accompanied. Nor was it so absurd to imagine that a quite different method might be attempted, by which a writer might offer reason to these men with so much more favour and advantage, as he appeared unprepossessed and willing to examine everything with the greatest unconcern and indifference. For to such persons as these 'tis to be feared 'twill always appear "that what was never questioned, was never proved; and that whatever subject had not, at some time or other, been examined with perfect indifference, was never rightly examined nor could rightly be believed." And in a treatise of this kind, offered as an Essay or Inquiry only, they would be far from finding that impartiality and indifference which is requisite, if, instead of a readiness to comply with whatever consequences such an examination as this and the course of reasoning brought forth, the author should show a previous inclination to the consequences only on one side, and an abhorrence of any conclusion on the other.

Others, therefore, in different circumstances, may perhaps have found it necessary, and becoming their character, to show all manner of detestation both of the persons and principles of these men. Our author, on the contrary, whose character exceeds not that of a layman, endeavours to show civility and favour by keeping the fairest measures he possibly can with the men of this sort, allowing them all he is able, and arguing with a perfect indifference, even on the subject of a Deity. He offers to conclude nothing positive himself, but leaves it to others to draw conclusions from his principles; having this one chief aim and intention: "how, in the first place, to reconcile these persons to the principles of virtue; that by this means a way might be laid open to religion, by removing those greatest, if not only obstacles to it, which arise from the vices and passions of men."

'Tis upon this account he endeavours chiefly to establish virtue on principles by which he is able to argue with those who are not as yet induced to own a God or future state. If he cannot do thus much, he reckons he does nothing. For how can supreme goodness be intelligible to those who know not what goodness itself is? Or how can virtue be understood to deserve reward, when as yet its merit and excellence is unknown? We begin surely at the wrong end when we would prove merit by favour, and order by a Deity. This our friend seeks to redress. For being, in respect of virtue, what you lately called a realist, he endeavours to show "that it is really something in itself, and in the nature of things; not arbitrary or factitious (if I may so speak); not constituted from without, or dependent on custom, fancy, or will; not even on the supreme will itself, which can no way govern it; but being necessarily good, is governed by it and ever uniform with it." And notwithstanding he has thus made virtue his chief subject, and in some measure independent on religion, yet I fancy he may possibly appear at last as high a divine as he is a moralist.

I would not willingly advance it as a rule "that those who make only a name of virtue make no more of Deity, and cannot without affectation defend the principles of religion"; but this I will venture to assert, "that whoever sincerely defends virtue, and is a realist in morality, must of necessity, in a manner, by the same scheme of reasoning, prove as very a realist in divinity."

All affectation, but chiefly in philosophy, I must own, I think unpardonable. And you, Philocles, who can give no quarter to ill reasoning, nor endure any unsound or inconsistent hypothesis; you will be so ingenuous, I dare say, as to reject our modern Deism, and challenge those who assume a name to which their philosophy can never in the least entitle them.

Commend me to honest Epicurus, who raises his deities aloft in the imaginary spaces, and setting them apart out of the universe and nature of things, makes nothing of them beyond a word. This is ingenuous and plain dealing; for this every one who philosophises may easily understand.

The same ingenuity belongs to those philosophers whom you, Philocles, seem inclined to favour. When a sceptic questions "whether a real theology can be raised out of philosophy alone, without the help of revelation," he does no more than pay a handsome compliment to authority and the received religion. He can impose on no one who reasons deeply; since whoever does so, will easily conceive that at this rate theology must have no foundation at all. For revelation itself, we know, is founded on the acknowledgment of a divine existence; and 'tis the province of philosophy alone to prove what revelation only supposes.

I look on it therefore as a most unfair way for those who would be builders, and undertake this proving part, to lay such a foundation as is insufficient to bear the structure. Supplanting and undermining may in other cases be fair war, but in philosophical disputes 'tis not allowable to work underground, or as in sieges by the sap. Nothing can be more unbecoming than to talk magisterially and in venerable terms of "a supreme Nature, an infinite Being, and a Deity," when all the while a providence is never meant, nor anything like order or the government of a mind admitted. For when these are understood, and real divinity acknowledged, the notion is not dry and barren, but such consequences are necessarily drawn from it as must set us in action, and find employment for our strongest affections. All the duties of religion evidently follow hence, and no exception remains against any of those great maxims which revelation has established.

Now whether our friend be unfeignedly and sincerely of this latter sort of real theologists, you will learn best from the consequences of his hypothesis. You will observe whether, instead of ending in mere speculation, it leads to practice; and you will then surely be satisfied when you see such a structure raised, as with the generality of the world must pass at least for high religion, and with some, in all likelihood, for no less than enthusiasm.

For I appeal to you, Philocles, whether there be anything in divinity which you think has more the air of enthusiasm than that notion of divine love such as separates from everything worldly, sensual, or meanly interested? A love which is simple, pure, and unmixed, which has no other object than merely the excellency of that being itself, nor admits of any other thought of happiness than in its single fruition. Now I dare presume you will take it as a substantial proof of my friend's being far enough from irreligion if it be shown that he has espoused this notion, and thinks of making out this high point of divinity, from arguments familiar even to those who oppose religion.

According therefore to his hypothesis he would in the first place, by way of prevention, declare to you that though the disinterested love of God were the most excellent principle, yet he knew very well that by the indiscreet zeal of some devout, well-meaning people it had been stretched too far, perhaps even to extravagance and enthusiasm, as formerly among the mystics of the ancient church, whom these of latter days have followed. On the other hand, that there were those who in opposition to this devout mystic way, and as professed enemies to what they call enthusiasm, had so far exploded everything of this ecstatic kind as in a manner to have given up devotion, and in reality had left so little of zeal, affection, or warmth, in what they call their rational religion, as to make them much suspected of their sincerity in any. For though it be natural enough (he would tell you) for a mere political writer to ground his great argument for religion on the necessity of such a belief as that of a future reward and punishment, yet, if you will take his opinion, 'tis a very ill token of sincerity in religion, and in the Christian religion more especially, to reduce it to such a philosophy as will allow no room to that other principle of love; but treats all of that kind as enthusiasm for so much as aiming at what is called disinterestedness, or teaching the love of God or virtue for God or virtue's sake.

Here, then, we have two sorts of people (according to my friend's account), who in these opposite extremes expose religion to the insults of its adversaries. For as on one hand 'twill be found difficult to defend the notion of that high-raised love espoused with so much warmth by those devout mystics, so on the other hand 'twill be found as hard a task, upon the principles of these cooler men, to guard religion from the imputation of mercenariness and a slavish spirit. For how shall one deny that to serve God by compulsion, or for interest merely, is servile and mercenary? Is it not evident that the only true and liberal service paid either to that supreme Being, or to any other superior, is that "which proceeds from an esteem or love of the person served, a sense of duty or gratitude, and a love of the dutiful and grateful part, as good and amiable in itself"? And where is the injury to religion from such a concession as this? Or what detraction is it from the belief of an after reward or punishment to own "that the service caused by it is not equal to that which is voluntary and with inclination, but is rather disingenuous and of the slavish kind"? Is it not still for the good of mankind and of the world that obedience to the rule of right should some way or other be paid, if not in the better way, yet at least in this imperfect one? And is it not to be shown "that although this service of fear be allowed ever so low or base, yet religion still being a discipline and progress of the soul towards perfection, the motive of reward and punishment is primary and of the highest moment with us, till, being capable of more sublime instruction, we are led from this servile state to the generous service of affection and love"?

To this it is that in our friend's opinion we ought all of us to aspire, so as to endeavour "that the excellence of the object, not the reward or punishment, should be our motive; but that where, through the corruption of our nature, the former of these motives is found insufficient to excite to virtue, there the latter should be brought in aid, and on no account be undervalued or neglected."

Now this being once established, how can religion be any longer subject to the imputation of mercenariness? But thus we know religion is often charged. "Godliness," say they, "is great gain; nor is God devoutly served for naught." . . . Is this therefore a reproach? Is it confessed there may be a better service, a more generous love? Enough, there needs no more. On this foundation our friend presumes it easy to defend religion, and even that devoutest part, which is esteemed so great a paradox of faith. For if there be in Nature such a service as that of affection and love, there remains then only to consider of the object whether there be really that supreme One we suppose; for if there be divine excellence in things, if there be in Nature a supreme mind or Deity, we have then an object consummate and comprehensive of all which is good or excellent. And this object, of all others, must of necessity be the most amiable, the most engaging, and of highest satisfaction and enjoyment. Now that there is such a principal object as this in the world, the world alone (if I may say so) by its wise and perfect order must evince. This order, if indeed perfect, excludes all real ill. And that it really does so, is what our author so earnestly maintains, by solving the best he can those untoward phenomena and ill signs, taken from the course of Providence, in the seemingly unequal lot of virtue in this world.

'Tis true, though the appearances hold ever so strongly against virtue, and in favour of vice, the objection which arises hence against a Deity may be easily removed, and all set right again on the supposal of a future state. This to a Christian, or one already convinced of so great a point, is sufficient to clear every dark cloud of Providence. For he needs not be over and above solicitous as to the fate of virtue in this world who is secure of hereafter. But the case is otherwise as to the people we are here to encounter. They are at a loss for Providence, and seek to find it in the world. The aggravation of the appearing disorders in worldly affairs, and the blackest representation of society and human nature, will hardly help them to this view. 'Twill be difficult for them to read Providence in such characters. From so uncomely a face of things below, they will presume to think unfavourably of all above. By the effects they see, they will be inclined to judge the cause, and by the fate of virtue to determine of a providence. But being once convinced of order and a providence as to things present, they may soon, perhaps, be satisfied even of a future state. For if virtue be to itself no small reward, and vice in a great measure its own punishment, we have a solid ground to go upon. The plain foundations of a distributive justice and due order in this world may lead us to conceive a further building. We apprehend a larger scheme, and easily resolve ourselves why things were not completed in this state, but their accomplishment reserved rather to some further period. For had the good and virtuous of mankind been wholly prosperous in this life; had goodness never met with opposition, nor merit ever lain under a cloud; where had been the trial, victory, or crown of virtue? Where had the virtues had their theatre, or whence their names? Where had been temperance or self-denial? Where patience, meekness, magnanimity? Whence have these their being? What merit except from hardship? What virtue without a conflict, and the encounter of such enemies as arise both within and from abroad?

But as many as are the difficulties which Virtue has to encounter in this world, her force is yet superior. Exposed as she is here, she is not however abandoned or left miserable. She has enough to raise her above pity, though not above our wishes, and as happy as we see her here, we have room for further hopes in her behalf. Her present portion is sufficient to show Providence already engaged on her side. And since there is such provision for her here, such happiness and such advantages even in this life, how probable must it appear that this providential care is extended yet further to a succeeding life, and perfected hereafter?

This is what, in our friend's opinion, may be said in behalf of a future state to those who question revelation. 'Tis this must render revelation probable, and secure that first step to it, the belief of a Deity and Providence. A providence must be proved from what we see of order in things present. We must contend for order; and in this part chiefly, where virtue is concerned, all must not be referred to a hereafter. For a disordered state, in which all present care of things is given up, vice uncontrolled, and virtue neglected, represents a very chaos, and reduces us to the beloved atoms, chance, and confusion of the atheists.

What therefore can be worse done in the cause of a Deity than to magnify disorder, and exaggerate (as some zealous people do) the misfortunes of virtue, so far as to render it an unhappy choice with respect to this world? They err widely who propose to turn men to the thoughts of a better world by making them think so ill of this. For to declaim in this manner against virtue to those of a looser faith, will make them the less believe a Deity, but not the more a future state. Nor can it be thought sincerely that any man, by having the most elevated opinion of virtue, and of the happiness it creates, was ever the less inclined to the belief of a future state. On the contrary, it will ever be found that as they who are favourers of vice are always the least willing to hear of a future existence, so they who are in love with virtue are the readiest to embrace that opinion which renders it so illustrious, and makes its cause triumphant.

Thus it was that among the ancients the great motive which inclined so many of the wisest to the belief of this doctrine, unrevealed to them, was purely the love of virtue in the persons of those great men, the founders and preservers of societies, the legislators, patriots, deliverers, heroes, whose virtues they were desirous should live and be immortalised. Nor is there at this day anything capable of making this belief more engaging among the good and virtuous than the love of friendship, which creates in them a desire not to be wholly separated by death, but that they may enjoy the same blessed society hereafter. How is it possible, then, that an author should, for exalting virtue merely, be deemed an enemy to a future state? How can our friend be judged false to religion for defending a principle on which the very notion of God and goodness depends? For this he says only, and this is the sum of all, "that by building a future state on the ruins of virtue, religion in general and the cause of a Deity is betrayed, and by making rewards and punishments the principal motives to duty, the Christian religion in particular is overthrown, and its greatest principle, that of love, rejected and exposed."

Upon the whole then we may justly as well as charitably conclude that it is truly our author's design, in applying himself with so much fairness to the men of looser principles, to lead them into such an apprehension of the constitution of mankind and of human affairs as might form in them a notion of order in things, and draw hence an acknowledgment of that wisdom, goodness, and beauty, which is supreme; that being thus far become proselytes, they might be prepared for that divine love which our religion would teach them, when once they should embrace its precepts, and form themselves to its sacred character.

Thus, continued he, I have made my friend's apology, which may have shown him to you perhaps a good moralist, and, I hope, no enemy to religion. But if you find still that the divine has not appeared so much in his character as I promised, I can never think of satisfying you in any ordinary way of conversation. Should I offer to go farther, I might be engaged deeply in spiritual affairs, and be forced to make some new model of a sermon upon his system of divinity. However, I am in hopes, now that in good earnest matters are come well-nigh to preaching, you will acquit me for what I have already performed.

Section IV

Just as he had made an end of speaking came in some visitants, who took us up the remaining part of the afternoon in other discourses. But these being over, and our strangers gone (all except the old gentleman and his friend, who had dined with us), we began anew with Theocles, by laying claim to his sermon, and entreating him again and again to let us hear him at large in his theological way.

This, he complained, was persecuting him; as you have seen company, said he, often persecute a reputed singer, not out of any fancy for the music, but to satisfy a malicious sort of curiosity, which ends commonly in censure and dislike.

However it might be, we told him we were resolved to persist. And I assured our companions that if they would second me heartily in the manner I intended to press him, we should easily get the better.

In revenge then, said he, I will comply on this condition, that since I am to sustain the part of the divine and preacher, it shall be at Philocles's cost, who shall bear the part of the infidel, and stand for the person preached to.

Truly, said the old gentleman, the part you have proposed for him is so natural and suitable that I doubt not he will be able to act it without the least pain. I could wish rather that you had spared yourself the trouble of putting him thus in mind of his proper character. He would have been apt enough of his own accord to interrupt your discourse by his perpetual cavils. Therefore since we have now had entertainment enough by way of dialogue, I desire the law of sermon may be strictly observed, and "that there be no answering to whatever is argued or advanced."

I consented to all the terms, and told Theocles I would stand his mark willingly; and besides, if I really were that infidel he was to suppose me, I should count it no unhappiness, since I was sure of being so thoroughly convinced by him if he would vouchsafe to undertake me.

Theocles then proposed we should walk out, the evening being fine, and the free air suiting better (as he thought) with such discourses than a chamber.

Accordingly we took our evening walk in the fields, from whence the laborious hinds were now retiring. We fell naturally into the praises of a country life, and discoursed awhile of husbandry and the nature of the soil. Our friends began to admire some of the plants which grew here to great perfection. And it being my fortune (as having acquired a little insight into the nature of simples) to say something they mightily approved upon this subject, Theocles immediately turning about to me, "O my ingenious friend!" said he, "whose reason in other respects must be allowed so clear and happy, how is it possible that with such insight, and accurate judgment in the particulars of natural beings and operations, you should no better judge of the structure of things in general, and of the order and frame of Nature? Who better than yourself can show the structure of each plant and animal body, declare the office of every part and organ, and tell the uses, ends, and advantages to which they serve? How therefore should you prove so ill a naturalist in this whole, and understand so little the anatomy of the world and Nature, as not to discern the same relation of parts, the same consistency and uniformity in the universe!

"Some men perhaps there are of so confused a thought, and so irregularly formed within themselves, that 'tis no more than natural for them to find fault, and imagine a thousand inconsistencies and defects in this wider constitution. 'Twas not, we may presume, the absolute aim or interest of the universal nature to render every private one infallible and without defect. 'Twas not its intention to leave us without some pattern of imperfection, such as we perceive in minds like these, perplexed with froward thought. But you, my friend, are master of a nobler mind. You are conscious of better order within, and can see workmanship and exactness in yourself and other innumerable parts of the creation, can you answer it to yourself, allowing thus much not to allow all? Can you induce yourself ever to believe or think that where there are parts so variously united, and conspiring fitly within themselves, the whole itself should have neither union nor coherence; and where inferior and private natures are often found so perfect, the universal one should want perfection, and be esteemed like whatsoever can be thought of, most monstrous, rude, and imperfect?

"Strange! that there should be in Nature the idea of an order and perfection which Nature herself wants! That beings which arise from Nature should be so perfect as to discover imperfection in her constitution, and be wise enough to correct that wisdom by which they were made!

"Nothing surely is more strongly imprinted on our minds, or more closely interwoven with our souls, than the idea or sense of order and proportion. Hence all the force of numbers, and those powerful arts founded on their management and use. What a difference there is between harmony and discord! cadency and convulsion! What a difference between composed and orderly motion, and that which is ungoverned and accidental! between the regular and uniform pile of some noble architect, and a heap of sand or stones! between an organised body, and a mist or cloud driven by the wind!

"Now as this difference is immediately perceived by a plain internal sensation, so there is withal in reason this account of it, that whatever things have order, the same have unity of design, and concur in one; are parts constituent of one whole or are, in themselves, entire systems. Such is a tree, with all its branches; an animal, with all its members; an edifice, with all its exterior and interior ornaments. What else is even a tune or symphony, or any excellent piece of music, than a certain system of proportioned sounds?

Now in this which we call the universe, whatever the perfection may be of any particular systems, or whatever single parts may have proportion, unity, or form within themselves, yet if they are not united all in general, in one system,[1] but

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[1] *Vid.* Locke: Of Human Understanding, bk. iv. ch. vi. § 11.

Ac mihi quidem veteres illi majus quiddam animo complexi plus multo etiam vidisse videntur, quam quantum nostrorum ingeniorum acies intueri potest: qui omnia haec, quae supra et subter, unum esse et una vi atque una consensione naturae constricta esse dixerunt. Nullum est enim genus rerum quod aut avulsum a caeteris per seipsum constare aut quo caetera, si careant, vim suam atque aeternitatem conservare possint.

["Indeed, those old authors seem to me to have had greater power of imagination, or even of vision, than is given to the penetration of our minds, when they declared that everything above and below us is one and bound together by one force and one harmony of Nature. For there is no are, in respect of one another, as the driven sands, or clouds, or breaking waves, then there being no coherence in the whole, there can be inferred no order, no proportion, and consequently no project or design. But if none of these parts are independent, but all apparently united, then is the whole a system complete, according to one simple, consistent, and uniform design.

"Here then is our main subject insisted on, that neither man nor any other animal, though ever so complete a system of parts as to all within, can be allowed in the same manner complete as to all without, but must be considered as having a further relation abroad to the system of his kind. So even this system of his kind to the animal system, this to the world (our earth), and this again to the bigger world and to the universe.

"All things in this world are united. For as the branch is united with the tree, so is the tree as immediately with the earth, air, and water which feed it. As much as the fertile mould is fitted to the tree, as much as the strong and upright trunk of the oak or elm is fitted to the twining branches of

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kind of thing which can stand alone if torn from the rest, or which, if withdrawn from the rest, would suffer them to keep their functions and duration."—Cicero, *De Oratore*, iii. § 20.]

Omne hoc quod vides, quo divina atque humana conclusa sunt, unum est; membra sumus corporis magni.

[*"* All that you see, of which God and man form parts, is one; we are the limbs of one great body."—Seneca, *Ep.* 95, 52.]

Societas nostra lapidum fornicationi simillima est: quae casura, nisi invicem obstarent, hoc ipso sustinetur.

[*"* Our fellowship is most like to the stones of an arch. The arch would fall if it were not held up by the stones blocking each other."—Seneca, *Ep.* 95, 53.]

Estne dei sedes, nisi terra, et pontus, et aether,
Et coelum, et virtus? Superos quid quaerimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.

[*"* What house is there for the god save earth and sea and air and sky and virtue? Why do we look for the gods outside ourselves? All that you see, all that you feel, is Jupiter."—Lucan, ix. 578-580.]

the vine or ivy; so much are the very leaves, the seeds, and fruits of these trees fitted to the various animals: these again to one another and to the elements where they live, and to which they are, as appendices, in a manner fitted and joined, as either by wings for the air, fins for the water, feet for the earth, and by other correspondent inward parts of a more curious frame and texture. Thus in contemplating all on earth, we must of necessity view all in one, as holding to one common stock. Thus too in the system of the bigger world. See there the mutual dependency of things! the relation of one to another; of the sun to this inhabited earth, and of the earth and other planets to the sun! the order, union, and coherence of the whole! and know, my ingenious friend, that by this survey you will be obliged to own the universal system and coherent scheme of things to be established on abundant proof, capable of convincing any fair and just contemplator of the works of Nature. For scarce would any one, till he had well surveyed this universal scene, believe a union thus evidently demonstrable, by such numerous and powerful instances of mutual correspondency and relation, from the minutest ranks and orders of beings to the remotest spheres.

"Now in this mighty union, if there be such relations of parts one to another as are not easily discovered, if on this account the end and use of things does not everywhere appear, there is no wonder, since 'tis no more indeed than what must happen of necessity; nor could supreme wisdom have otherwise ordered it. For in an infinity of things thus relative, a mind which sees not infinitely can see nothing fully; and since each particular has relation to all in general, it can know no perfect or true relation of any thing in a world not perfectly and fully known.

"The same may be considered in any dissected animal, plant, or flower; where he who is no anatomist, nor versed in natural history, sees that the many parts have a relation to the whole, for thus much even a slight view affords; but he who like you, my friend, is curious in the works of Nature, and has been let into a knowledge of the animal and vegetable world, he alone can readily declare the just relation of all these parts to one another, and the several uses to which they serve.

"But if you would willingly enter further into this thought, and consider how much we ought not only to be satisfied with this our view of things, but even to admire its clearness, imagine only some person entirely a stranger to navigation, and ignorant of the nature of the sea or waters; how great his astonishment would be, when finding himself on board some vessel, anchoring at sea, remote from all land prospect, whilst it was yet a calm, he viewed the ponderous machine firm and motionless in the midst of the smooth ocean, and considered its foundations beneath, together with its cordage, masts, and sails above. How easily would he see the whole one regular structure, all things depending on one another; the uses of the rooms below, the lodgments, and conveniences of men and stores? But being ignorant of the intent or design of all above, would he pronounce the masts and cordage to be useless and cumbersome, and for this reason condemn the frame and despise the architect? O my friend! let us not thus betray our ignorance; but consider where we are, and in what a universe. Think of the many parts of the vast machine in which we have so little insight, and of which it is impossible we should know the ends and uses, when instead of seeing to the highest pendants, we see only some lower deck, and are in this dark case of flesh, confined even to the hold and meanest station of the vessel.

"Now having recognised this uniform consistent fabric, and owned the universal system, we must of consequence acknowledge a universal mind, which no ingenious man can be tempted to disown, except through the imagination of disorder in the universe, its seat. For can it be supposed of any one in the world, that being in some desert far from men, and hearing there a perfect symphony of music, or seeing an exact pile of regular architecture arising gradually from the earth in all its orders and proportions, he should be persuaded that at the bottom there was no design accompanying this, no secret spring of thought, no active mind? Would he, because he saw no hand, deny the handiwork, and suppose that each of these complete and perfect systems were framed, and thus united in just symmetry and conspiring order, either by the accidental blowing of the winds or rolling of the sands?

"What is it then should so disturb our views of Nature, as to destroy that unity of design and order of a mind, which otherwise would be so apparent? All we can see either of the heavens or earth demonstrates order and perfection; so as to afford the noblest subjects of contemplation to minds, like yours, enriched with sciences and learning. All is delightful, amiable, rejoicing, except with relation to man only, and his circumstances, which seem unequal. Here the calamity and ill arises, and hence the ruin of this goodly frame. All perishes on this account; and the whole order of the universe, elsewhere so firm, entire, and immovable, is here overthrown and lost by this one view, in which we refer all things to ourselves, submitting the interest of the whole to the good and interest of so small a part.

"But how is it you complain of the unequal state of man, and of the few advantages allowed him above the beasts? What can a creature claim, so little differing from them, or whose merit appears so little above them, except in wisdom and virtue, to which so few conform? Man may be virtuous, and by being so, is happy. His merit is reward; by virtue he deserves, and in virtue only can meet his happiness deserved. But if even virtue itself be unprovided for, and vice, more prosperous, be the better choice; if this (as you suppose) be in the nature of things, then is all order in reality inverted, and supreme wisdom lost; imperfection and irregularity being, after this manner, undoubtedly too apparent in the moral world.

"Have you then, ere you pronounced this sentence, considered of the state of virtue and vice with respect to this life merely, so as to say, with assurance, when, and how far, in what particulars, and how circumstantiated, the one or the other is good or ill? You who are skilled in other fabrics and compositions, both of art and nature, have you considered of the fabric of the mind, the constitution of the soul, the connection and frame of all its passions and affections; to know accordingly the order and symmetry of the part, and how it either improves or suffers; what its force is when naturally preserved in its sound state, and what becomes of it when corrupted and abused? Till this, my friend, be well examined and understood, how shall we judge either of the force of virtue or power of vice? Or in what manner either of these may work to our happiness or undoing?

"Here, therefore, is that inquiry we should first make. But who is there can afford to make it as he ought? If happily we are born of a good nature; if a liberal education has formed in us a generous temper and disposition, well-regulated appetites, and worthy inclinations, 'tis well for us; and so indeed we esteem it. But who is there endeavours to give these to himself, or to advance his portion of happiness in this kind? Who thinks of improving, or so much as of preserving his share in a world where it must of necessity run so great a hazard, and where we know an honest nature is so easily corrupted? All other things relating to us are preserved with care, and have some art or economy belonging to them; this which is nearest related to us and on which our happiness depends, is alone committed to chance, and temper is the only thing ungoverned, whilst it governs all the rest.

"Thus we inquire concerning what is good and suitable to our appetites; but what appetites are good and suitable to us is no part of our examination. We inquire what is according to interest, policy, fashion, vogue; but it seems wholly strange and out of the way to inquire what is according to Nature. The balance of Europe, of trade, of power, is strictly sought after; while few have heard of the balance of their passions, or thought of holding these scales even. Few are acquainted with this province, or knowing in these affairs. But were we more so (as this inquiry would make us) we should then see beauty and decorum here, as well as elsewhere in Nature; and the order of the moral world would equal that of the natural. By this the beauty of virtue would appear, and hence (as has been shown) the supreme and sovereign beauty, the original of all which is good or amiable.

"But lest I should appear at last too like an enthusiast, I choose to express my sense, and conclude this philosophical sermon in the words of one of those ancient philologists, whom you are used to esteem. For divinity itself, says he, is surely beauteous, and of all beauties the brightest; though not a beauteous body, but that from whence the beauty of bodies is derived; not a beauteous plain, but that from whence the plain looks beautiful. The river's beauty, the sea's, the heaven's, and heavenly constellations all flow from hence as from a source eternal and incorruptible. As beings partake of this, they are fair, and flourishing, and happy; as they are lost to this, they are deformed, perished, and lost."

When Theocles had thus spoken he was formally complimented by our two companions. I was going to add something in the same way, but he presently stopped me by saying he should be scandalised, if instead of commending him, I did not, according to my character, choose rather to criticise some part or other of his long discourse.

If it must be so then, replied I, in the first place give me leave to wonder that, instead of the many arguments commonly brought for proof of a deity, you make use only of one single one to build on. I expected to have heard from you, in customary form, of a first cause, a first being, and a beginning of motion. How clear the idea was of an immaterial substance, and how plainly it appeared, that at some time or other matter must have been created. But as to all this you are silent. As for what is said of "A material unthinking substance being never able to have produced an immaterial thinking one," I readily grant it, but on the condition that this great maxim of nothing being ever made from nothing may hold as well on my side as my adversary's. And then, I suppose, that whilst the world endures, he will be at a loss how to assign a beginning to matter, or how to suggest a possibility of annihilating it. The spiritual men may, as long as they please, represent to us in the most eloquent manner, "That matter considered in a thousand different shapes, joined and disjoined, varied and modified to eternity, can never, of itself, afford one single thought, never occasion or give rise to anything like sense or knowledge." Their argument will hold good against a Democritus, an Epicurus, or any of the elder or latter atomists. But it will be turned on them by an examining Academist, and when the two substances are fairly set asunder, and considered apart as different kinds, 'twill be as strong sense, and as good argument, to say as well of the immaterial kind: "That do with it as you please, modify it a thousand ways, purify it, exalt it, sublime it, torture it ever so much or rack it, as they say, with thinking, you will never be able to produce or force the contrary substance out of it." The poor dregs of sorry matter can no more be made out of the simple pure substance of immaterial thought, than the high spirits of thought or reason can be extracted from the gross substance of heavy matter. So let the dogmatists make of this argument what they can.

But for your part, continued I, as you have stated the question, 'tis not about what was first or foremost, but what is instant and now in being. "For if deity be now really extant, if by any good token it appears that there is at this present a universal mind, 'twill easily be yielded there ever was one." . . . This is your argument. . . . You go (if I may say so) upon fact, and would prove that things actually are in such a state and condition, which if they really were, there would indeed be no dispute left. Your union is your main support. Yet how is it you prove this? What demonstration have you given? What have you so much as offered at, beyond bare probability? So far are you from demonstrating anything, that if this uniting scheme be the chief argument for deity (as you tacitly allow) you seem rather to have demonstrated, "that the case itself is incapable of demonstration." For, "how, say you, can a narrow mind see all things?" . . . And yet if in reality it sees not all, it had as good see nothing. The demonstrable part is still as far behind. For grant that this all, which lies within our view or knowledge, is orderly and united, as you suppose; this mighty all is a mere point still, a very nothing compared to what remains. "'Tis only a separate by-world (we'll say) of which perhaps there are, in the wide waste, millions besides, as horrid and deformed as this of ours is regular and proportioned. In length of time, amidst the infinite hurry and shock of beings, this single odd world, by accident, might have been struck out, and cast into some form (as among infinite chances what is there which may not happen?). But for the rest of matter, 'tis of a different hue. Old Father Chaos (as the poets call him) in these wild spaces reigns absolute, and upholds his realms of darkness. He presses hard upon our frontier, and one day, belike, shall by a furious inroad recover his lost right, conquer his rebel state, and reunite us to primitive discord and confusion."

This, said I, Theocles! (concluding my discourse) is all I dare offer in opposition to your philosophy. I imagined, indeed, you might have given me more scope; but you have retrenched yourself in narrower bounds. So that, to tell you truth, I look upon your theology to be hardly so fair or open as that of our divines in general. They are strict, it is true, as to names, but allow a greater latitude in things. Hardly indeed can they bear a home-charge, a downright questioning of deity; but in return they give always fair play against Nature, and allow her to be challenged for her failings. She may freely err, and we as freely censure. Deity, they think, is not accountable for her.

Only she for herself. But you are straiter, and more precise in this point. You have unnecessarily brought Nature into the controversy, and taken upon you to defend her honour so highly that I know not whether it may be safe for me to question her.

Let not this trouble you, replied Theocles, but be free to censure Nature, whatever may be the consequence. 'Tis only my hypothesis can suffer. If I defend it ill, my friends need not be scandalised. They are fortified, no doubt, with stronger arguments for a deity, and can well employ those metaphysical weapons, of whose edge you seem so little apprehensive. I leave them to dispute this ground with you, whenever they think fit. For my own arguments, if they can be supposed to make any part of this defence, they may be looked upon only as distant lines, or outworks, which may easily perhaps be won, but without any danger to the body of the place.

Notwithstanding, then, said I, that you are willing I should attack Nature in form, I choose to spare her in all other subjects, except man only. How comes it, I entreat you, that in this noblest of creatures, and worthiest her care, she should appear so very weak and impotent; whilst in mere brutes, and the irrational species, she acts with so much strength, and exerts such hardy vigour? Why is she spent so soon in feeble man, who is found more subject to diseases, and of fewer years than many of the wild creatures? They range secure, and proof against all the injuries of seasons and weather, want no help from art, but live in careless ease, discharged of labour, and freed from the cumbersome baggage of a necessitous human life. In infancy more helpful, vigorous in age, with senses quicker, and more natural sagacity, they pursue their interests, joys, recreations, and cheaply purchase both their food and maintenance, clothed and armed by Nature herself, who provides them both a couch and mansion. So has Nature ordered for the rest of creatures. Such is their hardiness, robustness, vigour. Why not the same for man? . . .

And do you stop thus short, said Theocles, in your expostulation? Methinks 'twere as easy to proceed, now you are in the way; and instead of laying claim to some few advantages of other creatures, you might as well stand for all, and complain "that man, for his part, should be anything less than a consummation of all advantages and privileges which Nature can afford." Ask not merely, why man is naked, why unhoofed, why slower-footed than the beasts? Ask "why he has not wings also for the air, fins for the water, and so on—that he might take possession of each element, and reign in all?"

Not so, said I, neither. This would be to rate him high indeed! As if he were, by nature, lord of all, which is more than I could willingly allow.

'Tis enough, replied he, that this is yielded. For if we allow once a subordination in his case; if Nature herself be not for man, but man for Nature; then must man, by his good leave, submit to the elements of Nature, and not the elements to him. Few of these are at all fitted to him, and none perfectly. If he be left in air, he falls headlong, for wings were not assigned him. In water he soon sinks. In fire he consumes. Within earth he suffocates. . . .

As for what dominion he may naturally have in other elements, said I, my concern truly is not very great in his behalf, since by art he can even exceed the advantages Nature has given to other creatures. But for the air, methinks it had been wonderfully obliging in Nature to have allowed him wings.

And what would he have gained by it, replied Theocles? For consider what an alteration of form must have ensued. Observe in one of those winged creatures whether the whole structure be not made subservient to this purpose, and all other advantages sacrificed to this single operation. The anatomy of the creature shows it, in a manner, to be all wing, its chief bulk being composed of two exorbitant muscles, which exhaust the strength of all the other, and engross (if I may say so) the whole economy of the frame. 'Tis thus the aerial racers are able to perform so rapid and strong a motion, beyond comparison with any other kind, and far exceeding their little share of strength elsewhere; these parts of theirs being made in such superior proportion, as in a manner to starve their companions. And in man's architecture, of so different an order, were the flying engines to be affixed, must not the other members suffer, and the multiplied parts starve one another? What think you of the brain in this partition? Is it not like to prove a starveling? Or would you have it be maintained at the same high rate, and draw the chief nourishment to itself, from all the rest? . . .

I understand you, said I, Theocles (interrupting him): the brain certainly is a great starver where it abounds, and the thinking people of the world, the philosophers and virtuosi especially, must be contented, I find, with a moderate share of bodily advantages for the sake of what they call parts and capacity in another sense. The parts, it seems, of one kind agree ill in their economy with the parts of the other. But to make this even on both sides, let us turn the tables, and the case, I suppose, will stand the same with the Milos of the age, the men of bodily prowess and dexterity. For not to mention a vulgar sort, such as wrestlers, vaulters, racers, hunters; what shall we say of our fine-bred gentlemen, our riders, fencers, dancers, tennis-players, and such like? 'Tis the body surely is the starver here; and if the brain were such a terrible devourer in the other way, the body and bodily parts seem to have their reprisals in this rank of men.

If then, said he, the case stands thus between man and man, how must it stand between man and a quite different creature? If the balance be so nice that the least thing breaks it, even in creatures of the same frame and order, of what fatal effect must it be to change the order itself, and make some essential alteration in the frame? Consider therefore how it is we censure Nature in these and such-like cases. "Why," says one, "was I not made by Nature strong as a horse? Why not hardy and robust as this brute-creature? or nimble and active as that other?" . . . And yet when uncommon strength, agility, and feats of body are subjoined, even in our own species, see what befalls! So that for a person thus in love with an athletic Milonean constitution, it were better, methinks, and more modest in him, to change the expostulation and ask, "Why was I not made in good earnest a very brute?" For that would be more suitable.

I am apt, indeed, said I, to think that the excellence of man lies somewhat different from that of a brute; and that such amongst us as are more truly men should naturally aspire to manly qualities, and leave the brute his own. But Nature, I see, has done well to mortify us in this particular by furnishing us with such slight stuff, and in such a tender frame, as is indeed wonderfully commodious to support that man-excellence of thought and reason, but wretchedly scanty and ineffectual for other purposes. As if it were her very design "to hinder us from aspiring ridiculously to what was misbecoming our character."

I see, said Theocles, you are not one of those timorous arguers who tremble at every objection raised against their opinion or belief, and are so intent in upholding their own side of the argument that they are unable to make the least concession on the other. Your wit allows you to divert yourself with whatever occurs in the debate: and you can pleasantly improve even what your antagonist brings as a support to his own hypothesis. This, indeed, is a fairer sort of practice than what is common nowadays. But 'tis no more than suitable to your character. And were I not afraid of speaking with an air of compliment in the midst of a philosophical debate, I should tell you, perhaps, what I thought of the becoming manner of your scepticism in opposition to a kind of bigot-sceptics, who forfeit their right to the philosophic character, and retain hardly so much as that of the gentleman or good companion. . . . But to our argument. . . .

Such then, continued he, is the admirable distribution of Nature, her adapting and adjusting not only the stuff or matter to the shape and form, and even the shape itself and form to the circumstance, place, element, or region; but also the affections, appetites, sensations, mutually to each other, as well as to the matter, form, action, and all besides: "All managed for the best, with perfect frugality and just reserve; profuse to none, but bountiful to all; never employing in one thing more than enough, but with exact economy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principal in every thing." And is not thought and reason principal in man? Would he have no reserve for these? no saving for this part of his engine? Or would he have the same stuff or matter, the same instruments or organs serve alike for different purposes, and an ounce be equivalent to a pound? . . . It cannot be. What wonders, then, can he expect from a few ounces of blood in such a narrow vessel, fitted for so small a district of Nature? Will he not rather think highly of that Nature which has thus managed his portion for him to best advantage, with this happy reserve (happy indeed for him, if he knows and uses it!) by which he has so much a better use of organs than any other creature? by which he holds his reason, is a man, and not a beast?

But beasts,[1] said I, have instincts which man has not.

True, said he, they have indeed perceptions, sensations, and pre-sensations[2] (if I may use the expression) which man, for his part, has not in any proportionable degree. Their females, newly pregnant, and before they have bore young, have a clear prospect or pre-sensation of their state which is to follow; know what to provide, and how, in what manner, and at what time. How many things do they preponderate?[3] How many at once comprehend? The seasons of the year, the country, climate, place, aspect, situation, the basis of their building, the materials, architecture; the diet and treatment of their offspring, in short, the whole economy of their nursery; and all this as perfectly at first, and when inexperienced, as at any time of their life afterwards. And "why not this, say you, in human kind?" Nay, rather, on the contrary, I ask "why this? where was the occasion or use? where the necessity? why this sagacity for men? Have they not what is better, in another kind? have they not reason and discourse? does not this instruct them? what need then of the other? where would be the prudent management at this rate? where the reserve?"

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[1] *Inquiry,* bk. ii. part i. § 3; part ii. § 1; and *Misc.* iv. ch. ii.

[2] *Infra,* part iii. § 2.

[3] [*I.e.* pre-ponder, pre-consider.]

The young of most other kinds, continued he, are instantly helpful to themselves, sensible, vigorous, know to shun danger and seek their good. A human infant is of all the most helpless, weak, infirm. And wherefore should it not have been thus ordered? Where is the loss in such a species? Or what is man the worse for this defect, amidst such large supplies? Does not this defect engage him the more strongly to society, and force him to own that he is purposely, and not by accident, made rational and sociable; and can no otherwise increase or subsist than in that social intercourse and community which is his natural state? Is not both conjugal affection and natural affection to parents, duty to magistrates, love of a common city, community, or country, with the other duties and social parts of life, deduced from hence and founded in these very wants? What can be happier than such a deficiency as is the occasion of so much good? What better than a want so abundantly made up, and answered by so many enjoyments? Now if there are still to be found among mankind, such as even in the midst of these wants seem not ashamed to affect a right of independency, and deny themselves to be by nature sociable; where would their shame have been had Nature otherwise supplied these wants? What duty or obligation had been ever thought of? What respect or reverence of parents, magistrates, their country, or their kind? Would not their full and self-sufficient state more strongly have determined them to throw off Nature, and deny the ends and author of their creation?

Whilst Theocles argued thus concerning Nature, the old gentleman, my adversary, expressed great satisfaction in hearing me, as he thought, refuted, and my opinions exposed. For he would needs believe these to be strongly my opinions, which I had only started as objections in the discourse. He endeavoured to reinforce the argument by many particulars from the common topics of the schoolmen and civilians. He added, withal, "That it was better for me to declare my sentiments openly, for he was sure I had strongly imbibed that principle, that the state of Nature was a state of war."[1]

That it was no state of government or public rule, replied I, you yourself allow. I do so. Was it then a state of fellowship or society? "No; for when men entered first into society they passed from the state of nature into that new one which is founded upon compact." And was that former state a tolerable one? Had it been absolutely intolerable, there had never been any such. Nor could we properly call that a state, which could not stand or endure for the least time. If man, therefore, could endure to live without society, and if it be true that he actually lived so when in the state of nature, how can it be said "that he is by nature sociable"?

The old gentleman seemed a little disturbed at my question, but having recovered himself, he said in answer, "That man indeed, from his own natural inclination, might not, perhaps, have been moved to associate, but rather from some particular circumstances."

His nature then, said I, was not so very good, it seems, since having no natural affection or friendly inclination belonging to him, he was forced into a social state against his will; and this not from any necessity in respect of outward things (for you have allowed him a tolerable subsistence), but in probability from such inconveniences as arose chiefly from himself and his own malignant temper and principles. And indeed 'twas no wonder if creatures who were naturally thus unsociable, should be as naturally mischievous and troublesome. If according to their nature they could live out of society with so little affection for one another's company, 'tis not likely that upon occasion they would spare one another's persons. If they were so sullen as not to meet for love, 'tis more than probable they would fight for interest. And thus from your own reasoning it appears "that the state of nature must in all likelihood have been little different from a state of war."

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[1] *Wit and Humour*, part iii. § 1.

He was going to answer me with some sharpness, as by his looks appeared, when Theocles, interposing, desired that as he had occasioned this dispute he might be allowed to try if he could end it by setting the question in a fairer light. You see, said he to the old gentleman, what artifice Philocles made use of, when he engaged you to allow that the state of nature and that of society were perfectly distinct. But let us question him now in his turn, and see whether he can demonstrate to us, "That there can be naturally any human state which is not social."

What is it then, said the old gentleman, which we call the state of nature?

Not that imperfect rude condition of mankind, said Theocles, which some imagine; but which, if it ever were in nature, could never have been of the least continuance, or any way tolerable, or sufficient for the support of human race. Such a condition cannot indeed so properly be called a state. For what if, speaking of an infant just coming into the world, and in the moment of the birth, I should fancy to call this a state, would it be proper?

Hardly so, I confess.

Just such a state, therefore, was that which we suppose of man ere yet he entered into society, and became in truth a human creature. 'Twas the rough draught of man, the essay or first effort of Nature, a species in the birth, a kind as yet unformed; not in its natural state, but under violence, and still restless, till it attained its natural perfection.

And thus, said Theocles (addressing still more particularly to the old gentleman), the case must necessarily stand, even on the supposal "that there was ever such a condition or state of men, when as yet they were unassociated, unacquainted, and consequently without any language or form of art." But "that it was their natural state to live thus separately," can never without absurdity be allowed. For sooner may you divest the creature of any other feeling or affection than that towards society and his likeness. Allowing you, however, the power of divesting him at pleasure, allowing you to reduce even whole parts and members of his present frame, would you transform him thus and call him still a man? Yet better might you do this indeed than you could strip him of his natural affections, separate him from all his kind, and enclosing him like some solitary insect in a shell, declare him still a man. So might you call the human egg or embryo the man. The bug which breeds the butterfly is more properly a fly, though without wings, than this imaginary creature is a man. For though his outward shape were human, his passions, appetites, and organs must be wholly different. His whole inward make must be reversed, to fit him for such a recluse economy and separate subsistence.

To explain this a little further, continued he, let us examine this pretended state of nature; how and on what foundation it must stand. "For either man must have been from eternity or not. If from eternity, there could be no primitive or original state, no state of nature other than we see at present before our eyes. If not from eternity, he arose either all at once (and consequently he was at the very first as he is now) or by degrees, through several stages and conditions, to that in which he is at length settled, and has continued for so many generations."

For instance, let us suppose he sprang, as the old poets feigned, from a big-bellied oak, and then belike he might resemble more a mandrake than a man. Let us suppose him at first with little more of life than is discovered in that plant which they call the sensitive. But when the mother-oak had been some time delivered, and the false birth by some odd accident or device was wrought into form, the members were then fully displayed, and the organs of sense began to unfold themselves. "Here sprang an ear; there peeped an eye. Perhaps a tail too came in company. For what superfluities Nature may have been charged with at first is difficult to determine. They dropped off, it seems, in time; and happily have left things at last in a good posture, and (to a wonder!) just as they should be."

This surely is the lowest view of the original affairs of human kind. For if a providence, and not chance, gave man his being, our argument for his social nature must surely be the stronger. But admitting his rise to be as we have described, and as a certain sort of philosophers would needs have it, Nature has then had no intention at all, no meaning or design in this whole matter. So how anything can be called natural in the case, how any state can be called a state of Nature, or according to Nature, one more than another, I know not.

Let us go on, however, and on their hypothesis consider which state we may best call Nature's own. "She has by accident, through many changes and chances, raised a creature which, springing at first from rude seeds of matter, proceeded till it became what now it is, and arrived where for many generations it has been at a stay." In this long procession (for I allow it any length whatever) I ask, "Where was it that this state of Nature could begin?" The creature must have endured many changes; and each change, whilst he was thus growing up, was as natural one as another. So that either there must be reckoned a hundred different states of Nature, or if one, it can be only that in which Nature was perfect, and her growth complete. Here where she rested and attained her end, here must be her state, or nowhere.

Could she then rest, think you, in that desolate state before society? Could she maintain and propagate the species, such as it now is, without fellowship or community? Show it us in fact anywhere, amongst any of our own kind. For as for creatures which may much resemble us in outward form, if they differ yet in the least part of their constitution, if their inwards are of a different texture, if their skin and pores are otherwise formed or hardened; if they have other excrescences of body, another temper, other natural inseparable habits or affections, they are not truly of our kind. If, on the other hand, their constitution be as ours, their natural parts or inward faculties as strong, and their bodily frame as weak as ours; if they have memory, and senses, and affections, and a use of organs as ours: 'tis evident they can no more by their goodwill abstain from society than they can possibly preserve themselves without it.

And here, my friends, we ought to remember what we discoursed a while since, and was advanced by Philocles himself, concerning the weakness of human bodies[1] and the necessitous state of man in respect of all other creatures; "his long and helpless infancy, his feeble and defenceless make, by which he is more fitted to be a prey himself than live by prey on others." Yet 'tis impossible for him to subsist like any of those grazing kinds. He must have better provision and choicer food than the raw herbage; a better couch and covering than the bare earth or open sky. How many conveniences of other kinds does he stand in need of? What union and strict society is required between the sexes to preserve and nurse their growing offspring? This kind of society will not, surely, be denied to man, which to every beast of prey is known proper and natural. And can we allow this social part to man, and go no further? Is it possible he should pair, and live in love and fellowship with his partner and offspring, and remain still wholly wild and speechless, and without those arts of storing, building, and other economy, as natural to him, surely, as to the beaver, or to the ant or bee? Where, therefore, should he break off from this society if once begun? For that it began thus, as early as generation, and grew into a household and economy, is plain.

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[1] P. 72.

Must not this have grown soon into a tribe? and this tribe into a nation? Or though it remained a tribe only, was not this still a society for mutual defence and common interest? In short, if generation be natural, if natural affection and the care and nurture of the offspring be natural, things standing as they do with man, and the creature being of that form and constitution he now is, it follows "that society must be also natural to him," and "that out of society and community he never did, nor ever can, subsist."

To conclude, said he (addressing still to the two companions), I will venture to add a word in behalf of Philocles: that since the learned have such a fancy for this notion, and love to talk of this imaginary state of Nature, I think 'tis even charity to speak as ill of it as we possibly can. Let it be a state of war, rapine, and injustice. Since 'tis unsocial, let it even be as uncomfortable and as frightful as 'tis possible. To speak well of it is to render it inviting and tempt men to turn hermits. Let it, at least, be looked on as many degrees worse than the worst government in being. The greater dread we have of anarchy, the better countrymen we shall prove, and value more the laws and constitution under which we live, and by which we are protected from the outrageous violences of such an unnatural state. In this I agree heartily with those transformers of human nature who, considering it abstractedly and apart from government or society, represent it under monstrous visages of dragons, leviathans, and I know not what devouring creatures. They would have done well, however, to have expressed themselves more properly in their great maxim. For to say in disparagement of man "that he is to man a wolf" appears somewhat absurd, when one considers that wolves are to wolves very kind and loving creatures. The sexes strictly join in the care and nurture of the young, and this union is continued still between them. They howl to one another to bring company, whether to hunt, or invade their prey, or assemble on the discovery of a good carcase. Even the swinish kinds want not common affection, and run in herds to the assistance of their distressed fellows. The meaning, therefore, of this famous sentence (if it has any meaning at all) must be, "That man is naturally to man as a wolf is to a tamer creature"; as, for instance, to a sheep. But this will be as little to the purpose as to tell us that "there are different species or characters of men; that all have not this wolfish nature,[1] but that one half at least are naturally innocent and mild." And thus the sentence comes to nothing. For without belying nature and contradicting what is evident from natural history, fact, and the plain course of things, 'tis impossible to assent to this ill-natured proposition when we have even done our best to make tolerable sense of it. . . . But such is mankind! And even here human nature shows itself, such as it is, not perfect or absolutely successful, though rightly tending and moved by proper and just principles. 'Tis here, therefore, in philosophy as in the common conversations of the world. As fond as men are of company, and as little able to enjoy any happiness out of it, they are yet strangely addicted to the way of satire. And in the same manner as a malicious censure, craftily worded and pronounced with assurance, is apt to pass with mankind for shrewd wit, so a virulent maxim in bold expressions, though without any justness of thought, is readily received for true philosophy.

SECTION V

IN these discourses the evening ended, and, night advancing, we returned home from our walk. At supper, and afterwards for the rest of that night, Theocles said little. The discourse was now managed chiefly by the two companions, who turned it upon a new sort of philosophy, such as you will excuse me, good Palemon, if I pass over with more haste.

There was much said, and with great learning, on the nature of spirits and apparitions, of which the most astonishing accounts were the most ravishing with our friends, who endeavoured to exceed one another in this admirable way, and performed to a miracle in raising one another's amazement. Nothing was so charming with them as that which was disagreeing and odd; nothing so soothing as that which moved horror. In short, whatever was rational, plain, and easy bore no relish; and nothing came amiss which was cross to nature, out of sort and order, and in no proportion or harmony with the rest of things. Monstrous births, prodigies, enchantments, elementary [1] wars and convulsions were our chief entertainment. One would have thought that in a kind of rivalship between Providence and Nature, the latter lady was made to appear as homely as possible, that her deformities might recommend and set off the beauties of the former. For to do our friends justice, I must own I thought their intention to be sincerely religious. But this was not a face of religion I was like to be enamoured with. It was not from hence I feared being made enthusiastic or superstitious. If ever I became so, I found it would rather be after Theocles's manner. The monuments and churchyards were not such powerful scenes with me as the mountains, the plains, the solemn woods and groves, of whose inhabitants I chose much rather to hear than of the other. And I was readier to fancy truth in those poetical fictions which Theocles made use of than in any of his friend's ghastly stories, so pompously set off, after the usual way, in a lofty tone of authority and with an assuming air of truth.

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[1] *Wit and Humour*, part ii. § 1; part iii. § 3.

You may imagine, Palemon, that my scepticism,[2] with which you so often reproach me, could not well forsake me here; nor could it fail to give disturbance to our companions, especially to the grave gentleman who had clashed with me some time before. He bore with me awhile, till having lost all patience, "One must certainly," said he, "be master of no small share of assurance to hold out against the common opinion of the world and deny things which are known by the report of the most considerable part of mankind."

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[1] [*I.e.* elemental.]

[2] *Misc.* ii. ch. ii.; v. ch. i. iii.

This, said I, is far from being my case. You have never yet heard me deny anything, though I have questioned many. If I suspend my judgment, 'tis because I have less sufficiency than others. There are people, I know, who have so great a regard to every fancy of their own, that they can believe their very dreams. But I, who could never pay any such deference to my sleeping fancies, am apt sometimes to question even my waking thoughts and examine "whether these are not dreams too," since men have a faculty of dreaming sometimes with their eyes open. You will own 'tis no small pleasure with mankind to make their dreams pass for realities, and that the love of truth is, in earnest, not half so prevalent as this passion for novelty and surprise, joined with a desire of making impression and being admired. However, I am so charitable still as to think there is more of innocent delusion than voluntary imposture in the world, and that they who have most imposed on mankind have been happy in a certain faculty of imposing first upon themselves, by which they have a kind of salvo for their consciences, and are so much the more successful, as they can act their part more naturally and to the life. Nor is it to be esteemed a riddle that men's dreams should sometimes have the good fortune of passing with them for truth, when we consider that in some cases that which was never so much as dreamt of, or related as truth, comes afterwards to be believed by one who has often told it.

So that the greatest impostor in the world, replied he, at this rate may be allowed sincere.

As to the main of his imposture, said I, perhaps he may, notwithstanding some pious frauds made use of between whiles in behalf of a belief thought good and wholesome. And so very natural do I take this to be, that in all religions except the true I look upon the greatest zeal to be accompanied with the strongest inclination to deceive. For the design and end being the truth, 'tis not customary to hesitate or be scrupulous about the choice of means. Whether this be true or no, I appeal to the experience of the last age, in which 'twill not be difficult to find very remarkable examples, where imposture and zeal, bigotry and hypocrisy, have lived together in one and the same character.

Let this be as it will, replied he, I am sorry, upon the whole, to find you of such an incredulous temper.

'Tis just, said I, that you should pity me as a sufferer for losing that pleasure which I see others enjoy. For what stronger pleasure is there with mankind, or what do they earlier learn or longer retain, than the love of hearing and relating things strange and incredible? How wonderful a thing is the love of wondering and of raising wonder! 'Tis the delight of children to hear tales they shiver at, and the vice of old age to abound in strange stories of times past. We come into the world wondering at everything, and when our wonder about common things is over, we seek something new to wonder at. Our last scene is to tell wonders of our own to all who will believe them. And amidst all this, 'tis well if truth comes off but moderately tainted.

'Tis well, replied he, if with this moderate faith of yours you can believe any miracles whatever.

No matter, said I, how incredulous I am of modern miracles, if I have a right faith in those of former times by paying the deference due to sacred writ. 'Tis here I am so much warned against credulity, and enjoined never to believe even the greatest miracles which may be wrought, in opposition to what has been already taught me. And this injunction I am so well fitted to comply with, that I can safely engage to keep still in the same faith and promise never to believe amiss.

But is this a promise which can well be made?

If not, and that my belief indeed does not absolutely depend upon myself, how am I accountable for it? I may be justly punished for actions in which my will is free, but with what justice can I be challenged for my belief, if in this I am not at my liberty? If credulity and incredulity are defects only in the judgment; and the best-meaning person in the world may err on either side, whilst a much worse man, by having better parts, may judge far better of the evidence of things; how can you punish him who errs, unless you would punish weakness and say 'tis just for men to suffer for their unhappiness, and not their fault?

I am apt to think, said he, that very few of those who are punished for their incredulity can be said to be sufferers for their weakness.

Taking it for granted then, replied I, that simplicity and weakness is more the character of the credulous than of the unbelieving, yet I see not but that even this way still we are as liable to suffer by our weakness as in the contrary case by an over-refined wit. For if we cannot command our own belief, how are we secure against those false prophets and their deluding miracles of which we have such warning given us? How are we safe from heresy and false religion? Credulity being that which delivers us up to all impostures of this sort, and which actually at this day hold the Pagan and Mahometan world in error and blind superstition. Either, therefore, there is no punishment due to wrong belief, because we cannot believe as we will ourselves, or if we can, why should we not promise never to believe amiss? Now in respect of miracles to come, the surest way never to believe amiss is never to believe at all. For being satisfied of the truth of our religion by past miracles, so as to need no other to confirm us, the belief of new may often do us harm, but can never do us good. Therefore as the truest mark of a believing Christian is to seek after no sign or miracle to come, so the safest station in Christianity is his who can be moved by nothing of this kind, and is thus miracle-proof. For if the miracle be on the side of his faith, 'tis superfluous, and he needs it not; if against his faith, let it be as great as possible, he will never regard it in the least, or believe it any other than imposture, though coming from an angel. So that with all that incredulity for which you reproach me so severely, I take myself to be still the better and more orthodox Christian. At least I am more sure of continuing so than you, who with your credulity may be imposed upon by such as are far short of angels. For having this preparatory disposition, 'tis odds you may come in time to believe miracles in any of the different sects who, we know, all pretend to them. I am persuaded, therefore, that the best maxim to go by is that common one, "That miracles are ceased." And I am ready to defend this opinion of mine to be the most probable in itself, as well as most suitable to Christianity.

This question, upon further debate, happened to divide our two companions. For the elderly gentleman, my antagonist, maintained "that the giving up of miracles for the time present would be of great advantage to the atheists." The younger gentleman, his companion, questioned "whether the allowing them might not be of as great advantage to the enthusiasts and sectaries against the national church; this of the two being the greatest danger, he thought, both to religion and the state." He was resolved, therefore, for the future to be as cautious in examining these modern miracles as he had before been eager in seeking them. He told us very pleasantly what an adventurer he had been of that kind, and on how many parties he had been engaged, with a sort of people who were always on the hot scent of some new prodigy or apparition, some upstart revelation or prophecy. This, he thought, was true fanaticism errant. He had enough of this visionary chase, and would ramble no more in blind corners of the world, as he had been formerly accustomed, in ghostly company of spirit-hunters, witch-finders, and layers-out for hellish stories and diabolical transactions. There was no need, he thought, of such intelligences from hell to prove the power of heaven and being of a God. And now at last he began to see the ridicule of laying such a stress on these matters, as if a providence depended on them and religion were at stake when any of these wild feats were questioned. He was sensible there were many good Christians who made themselves strong partisans in this cause, though he could not avoid wondering at it, now he began to consider and look back.

The heathens, he said, who wanted Scripture, might have recourse to miracles; and Providence perhaps had allowed them their oracles and prodigies as an imperfect kind of revelation. The Jews too, for their hard heart and harder understanding, had this allowance, when stubbornly they asked for signs and wonders. But Christians, for their parts, had a far better and truer revelation; they had their plainer oracles, a more rational law and clearer Scripture, carrying its own force, and withal so well attested as to admit of no dispute. And were I, continued he, to assign the exact time when miracles probably might first have ceased, I should be tempted to fancy it was when sacred writ took place and was completed.

This is fancy indeed, replied the grave gentleman, and a very dangerous one to that Scripture you pretend is of itself so well attested. The attestation of men dead and gone, in behalf of miracles past and at an end, can never surely be of equal force with miracles present; and of these, I maintain, there are never wanting a number sufficient in the world to warrant a divine existence. If there were no miracles nowadays, the world would be apt to think there never were any. The present must answer for the credibility of the past. This is "God witnessing for himself," not "men for God." For who shall witness for men, if in the case of religion they have no testimony from heaven in their behalf?

What it is may make the report of men credible, said the younger gentleman, is another question. But for mere miracles, it seems to me, they cannot be properly said "to witness either for God or men." For who shall witness for the miracles themselves? And what though they are ever so certain? What security have we that they are not acted by demons? What proof that they are not wrought by magic? In short, "what trust is there to anything above or below, if the signs are only of power and not of goodness?"

And are you so far improved then, replied the severe companion, under your new sceptical master (pointing to me) that you can thus readily discard all miracles as useless? . . .

The young gentleman, I saw, was somewhat daunted with this rough usage of his friend, who was going on still with his invective. Nay then, said I, interposing, 'tis I who am to answer for this young gentleman, whom you make to be my disciple. And since his modesty, I see, will not allow him to pursue what he has so handsomely begun, I will endeavour it myself, if he will give me leave.

The young gentleman assented, and I went on representing his fair intention of establishing in the first place a rational and just foundation for our faith, so as to vindicate it from the reproach of having no immediate miracles to support it. He would have done this, I said, undoubtedly by showing how good proof we had already for our sacred oracles from the testimony of the dead, whose characters and lives might answer for them as to the truth of what they reported to us from God. This, however, was by no means "witnessing for God," as the zealous gentleman had hastily expressed himself, for this was above the reach either of men or miracles. Nor could God witness for himself, or assert his being any other way to men, than "by revealing himself to their reason, appealing to their judgment, and submitting his ways to their censure and cool deliberation." The contemplation of the universe, its laws and government, was, I averred, the only means which could establish the sound belief of a Deity. For what though innumerable miracles from every part assailed the sense and gave the trembling soul no respite? What though the sky should suddenly open and all kinds of prodigies appear, voices be heard or characters read? What would this evince more than "that there were certain powers could do all this"? But "what powers, whether one or more, whether superior or subaltern, mortal or immortal, wise or foolish, just or unjust, good or bad"; this would still remain a mystery, as would the true intention, the infallibility or certainty of whatever those powers asserted. Their word could not be taken in their own case. They might silence men indeed, but not convince them; since "power can never serve as proof for goodness,[1] and goodness is the only pledge of truth." By goodness alone trust is created. By goodness superior powers may win belief. They must allow their works to be examined, their actions criticised; and thus, thus only, they may be confided in; "When by repeated marks their benevolence is proved, and their character of sincerity and truth established." To whom therefore the laws of this universe and its government appear just and uniform, to him they speak the government of one Just One; to him they reveal and witness a God; and laying in him the foundation of this first faith, they fit him for a subsequent one.[2] He can then hearken to historical revelation, and is then fitted (and not till then) for the reception of any message or miraculous notice from above, where he knows beforehand all is just and true. But this no power of miracles, nor any power besides his reason, can make him know or apprehend.

But now, continued I, since I have been thus long the defendant only, I am resolved to take up offensive arms and be aggressor in my turn, provided Theocles be not angry with me for borrowing ground from his hypothesis.

Whatever you borrow of his, replied my antagonist, you are pretty sure of spoiling it; and as it passes through your hands you had best beware lest you seem rather to reflect on him than me.

I'll venture it, said I, whilst I maintain that most of those maxims you build upon are fit only to betray your own cause. For whilst you are labouring to unhinge Nature, whilst you are searching heaven and earth for prodigies, and studying how to miraculise everything, you bring confusion on the world, you break its uniformity and destroy that admirable simplicity of order from whence the one infinite and perfect principle is known. Perpetual strifes, convulsions, violences, breach of laws, variation and unsteadiness of order, show either no control, or several uncontrolled and unsubordinate powers in Nature. We have before our eyes either the chaos and atoms of the atheists, or the magic and demons of the polytheists. Yet is this tumultuous system of the universe asserted with the highest zeal by some who would maintain a Deity. This is that face of things, and these the features by which they represent divinity. Hither the eyes of our more inquisitive and ingenuous youth are turned with care, lest they see anything otherwise than in this perplexed and amazing view. As if atheism were the most natural inference which could be drawn from a regular and orderly state of things! But after all this mangling and disfigurement of Nature, if it happens (as oft it does) that the amazed disciple, coming to himself and searching leisurely into Nature's ways, finds more of order, uniformity, and constancy in things than he suspected, he is, of course, driven into atheism; and this merely by the impressions he received from that preposterous system which taught him to seek for Deity in confusion, and to discover Providence in an irregular disjointed world.

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[1] *Wit and Humour,* part ii. § 2; *Misc.* v. ch. iii.

[2] *Advice to an Author,* part iii. § 1; and *Moralists,* part ii. § 3.

And when you, replied he, with your newly-espoused system, have brought all things to be as uniform, plain, regular, and simple as you could wish, I suppose you will send your disciple to seek for Deity in mechanism; that is to say, in some exquisite system of self-governed matter. For what else is it you naturalists make of the world than a mere machine?

Nothing else, replied I, if to the machine you allow a mind. For in this case 'tis not a self-governed but a God-governed machine.

And what are the tokens, said he, which should convince us? What signs should this dumb machine give of its being thus governed?

The present, replied I, are sufficient. It cannot possibly give stronger signs of life and steady thought. Compare our own machines with this great one, and see whether by their order, management, and motions they betoken either so perfect a life or so consummate an intelligence. The one is regular, steady, permanent; the other are irregular, variable, inconstant. In one there are the marks of wisdom and determination; in the other of whimsy and conceit: in one there appears judgment; in the other, fancy only: in one, will; in the other, caprice: in one, truth, certainty, knowledge; in the other, error, folly, and madness. But to be convinced there is something above which thinks and acts, we want, it seems, the latter of these signs, as supposing there can be no thought or intelligence beside what is like our own. We sicken and grow weary with the orderly and regular course of things. Periods, and stated laws, and revolutions, just and proportionable, work not upon us, nor win our admiration. We must have riddles, prodigies, matter for surprise and horror! By harmony, order, and concord we are made atheists; by irregularity and discord we are convinced of Deity! "The world is mere accident if it proceeds in course, but an effect of wisdom if it runs mad!"

Thus I took upon me the part of a sound theist whilst I endeavoured to refute my antagonist and show that his principles favoured atheism. The zealous gentleman took high offence, and we continued debating warmly till late at night. But Theocles was moderator, and we retired at last to our repose, all calm and friendly. However, I was not a little rejoiced to hear that our companions were to go away early the next morning and leave Theocles to me alone.

For now, Palemon, that morning was approaching for which I so much longed. What your longing may prove I may have reason to fear. You have had enough, one would think, to turn the edge of your curiosity in this kind. Can it be imagined that after the recital of two such days already past you can with patience hear of another yet to come, more philosophical than either? . . . But you have made me promise; and now, whatever it cost, take it you must, as follows.

PART III

Section I

Philocles to Palemon

It was yet deep night (as I imagined) when I waked with the noise of people up in the house. I called to know the matter, and was told that Theocles had a little before parted with his friends, after which he went out to take his morning walk, but would return, they thought, pretty soon: for so he had left word, and that nobody in the meantime should disturb my rest.

This was disturbance sufficient when I heard it. I presently got up, and finding it light enough to see the hill, which was at a little distance from the house, I soon got thither, and at the foot of it overtook Theocles, to whom I complained of his unkindness. For I was not certainly (I told him) so effeminate and weak a friend as to deserve that he should treat me like a woman; nor had I shown such an aversion to his manners or conversation as to be thought fitter for the dull luxury of a soft bed and ease than for business, recreation, or study with an early friend. He had no other way, therefore, of making me amends than by allowing me henceforward to be a party with him in his serious thoughts, as he saw I was resolved to be in his hours and exercises of this sort.

You have forgot then, said Theocles, the assignation you had yesterday with the silvan nymphs at this place and hour? No, truly, said I, for, as you see, I am come punctually to the place appointed. But I never expected you should have come hither without me. Nay then, said Theocles, there is hope you may in time become a lover with me, for you already begin to show jealousy. How little did I think these nymphs could raise that passion in you? Truly, said I, for the nymphs you mention, I know little of them as yet. My jealousy and love regard you only. I was afraid you had a mind to escape me; but now that I am again in possession of you, I want no nymph to make me happy here, unless it were perhaps to join forces against you, in the manner your beloved poet makes the nymph Ægle join with his two youths in forcing the god Silenus to sing to them.

I dare trust your gallantry, replied Theocles, that if you had such fair company as you speak of, you would otherwise bestow your time than in an adventure of philosophy. But do you expect I should imitate the poet's God you mentioned, and sing "the rise of things from atoms, the birth of order from confusion, and the origin of union, harmony, and concord from the sole powers of chaos and blind chance"? The song indeed was fitted to the God. For what could better suit his jolly character than such a drunken creation, which he loved often to celebrate by acting it to the life? But even this song was too harmonious for the night's debauch. Well has our poet made it of the morning when the God was fresh; for hardly should we be brought ever to believe that such harmonious numbers could arise from a mere chaos of the mind. But we must hear our poet speaking in the mouth of some soberer demi-god or hero. He then presents us with a different principle of things, and in a more proper order of precedency gives thought the upper hand. He makes mind originally to have governed body, not body mind; for this had been a chaos everlasting, and must have kept all things in a chaos-state to this day, and for ever, had it ever been. But

Hymn to Natu

The active mind, infused through all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass;
Hence men and beasts.[1]

Here, Philocles, we shall find our sovereign genius, if we can charm the genius of the place (more chaste and sober than your Silenus) to inspire us with a truer song of Nature, teach us some celestial hymn, and make us feel divinity present in these solemn places of retreat.

Haste then, I conjure you, said I, good Theocles, and stop not one moment for any ceremony or rite. For well I see, methinks, that without any such preparation some divinity has approached us and already moves in you. We are come to the sacred groves of the Hamadryads, which formerly were said to render oracles. We are on the most beautiful part of the hill, and the sun, now ready to rise, draws off the curtain of night and shows us the open scene of Nature in the plains below. Begin: for now I know you are full of those divine thoughts which meet you ever in this solitude. Give them but voice and accents; you may be still as much alone as you are used, and take no more notice of me than if I were absent.

Just as I had said this, he turned away his eyes from me, musing awhile by himself; and soon afterwards, stretching out his hand, as pointing to the objects round him, he began:—

"Ye fields and woods, my refuge from the toilsome world of business, receive me in your quiet sanctuaries, and favour my retreat and thoughtful solitude. Ye verdant plains, how gladly I salute ye! Hail all ye blissful mansions! known seats! delightful prospects! majestic beauties of this earth, and all ye rural powers and graces! Blessed be ye chaste abodes of happiest mortals, who here in peaceful innocence enjoy a life unenvied, though divine; whilst with its blessed tranquillity it affords a happy leisure and retreat for man, who, made for contemplation, and to search his own and other natures, may here best meditate the cause of things, and, placed amidst the various scenes of Nature, may nearer view her works.

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[1] [Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 726-728.]

"O glorious nature! supremely fair and sovereignly good! all-loving and all-lovely, all-divine! whose looks are so becoming and of such infinite grace; whose study brings such wisdom, and whose contemplation such delight; whose every single work affords an ampler scene, and is a nobler spectacle than all which ever art presented! O mighty Nature! wise substitute of Providence! impowered creatress! Or thou impowering Deity, supreme creator! Thee I invoke and thee alone adore. To thee this solitude, this place, these rural meditations are sacred; whilst thus inspired with harmony of thought, though unconfined by words, and in loose numbers, I sing of Nature's order in created beings, and celebrate the beauties which resolve in thee, the source and principle of all beauty and perfection.

"Thy being is boundless, unsearchable, impenetrable. In thy immensity all thought is lost, fancy gives over its flight, and wearied imagination spends itself in vain, finding no coast nor limit of this ocean, nor, in the widest tract through which it soars, one point yet nearer the circumference than the first centre whence it parted. Thus having oft essayed, thus sallied forth into the wide expanse, when I return again within myself, struck with the sense of this so narrow being and of the fulness of that immense one, I dare no more behold the amazing depths nor sound the abyss of Deity.

"Yet since by thee, O sovereign mind, I have been formed such as I am, intelligent and rational, since the peculiar dignity of my nature is to know and contemplate thee, permit that with due freedom I exert those faculties with which thou hast adorned me. Bear with my venturous and bold approach. And since nor vain curiosity, nor fond conceit, nor love of aught save thee alone inspires me with such thoughts as these, be thou my assistant and guide me in this pursuit, whilst I venture thus to tread the labyrinth of wide Nature and endeavour to trace thee in thy works."

Here he stopped short, and starting as out of a dream: now, Philocles, said he, inform me, how have I appeared to you in my fit? Seemed it a sensible kind of madness, like those transports which are permitted to our poets? or was it downright raving?

I only wish, said I, that you had been a little stronger in your transport, to have proceeded as you began, without ever minding me. For I was beginning to see wonders in that Nature you taught me, and was coming to know the hand of your divine Artificer. But if you stop here I shall lose the enjoyment of the pleasing vision. And already I begin to find a thousand difficulties in fancying such a universal genius as you describe.

Why, said he, is there any difficulty in fancying the universe to be one entire thing? Can one otherwise think of it, by what is visible, than that all hangs together as of a piece? Grant it; and what follows? Only this, that if it may indeed be said of the world "that it is simply one," there should be something belonging to it which makes it one. As how? No otherwise than as you may observe in everything. For to instance in what we see before us; I know you look upon the trees of this vast wood to be different from one another; and this tall oak, the noblest of the company, as it is by itself a different thing from all its fellows of the wood, so with its own wood of numerous spreading branches (which seem so many different trees) 'tis still, I suppose, one and the self-same tree. Now should you, as a mere caviller, and not as a fair sceptic, tell me that if a figure of wax, or any other matter, were cast in the exact shape and colours of this tree, and tempered, if possible, to the same kind of substance, it might therefore possibly be a real tree of the same kind or species, I would have done with you, and reason no longer. But if you questioned me fairly, and desired I should satisfy you what I thought it was which made this oneness or sameness in the tree or any other plant, or by what it differed from the waxen figure, or from any such figure accidentally made, either in the clouds, or on the sand by the sea shore, I should tell you that neither the wax, nor sand, nor cloud thus pieced together by our hand or fancy had any real relation within themselves, or had any nature by which they corresponded any more in that near situation of parts than if scattered ever so far asunder. But this I should affirm, "that wherever there was such a sympathising of parts as we saw here in our real tree, wherever there was such a plain concurrence in one common end, and to the support, nourishment, and propagation of so fair a form, we could not be mistaken in saying there was a peculiar nature belonging to this form, and common to it with others of the same kind." By virtue of this, our tree is a real tree, lives, flourishes, and is still one and the same even when by vegetation and change of substance not one particle in it remains the same.

At this rate indeed, said I, you have found a way to make very adorable places of these sylvan habitations. For besides the living genius of each place, the woods too, which by your account are animated, have their Hamadryads, no doubt, and the springs and rivulets their nymphs in store belonging to them, and these too, by what I can apprehend, of immaterial and immortal substances.

We injure them then, replied Theocles, to say "they belong to these trees," and not rather "these trees to them." But as for their immortality, let them look to it themselves. I only know that both theirs and all other natures must for their duration depend alone on that Nature on which the world depends; and that every genius else must be subordinate to that one Good Genius, whom I would willingly persuade you to think belonging to this world, according to our present way of speaking.

Leaving, therefore, these trees, continued he, to personate themselves the best they can, let us examine this thing of personality between you and me, and consider how you, Philocles, are you, and I am myself. For that there is a sympathy of parts in these figures of ours other than in those of marble formed by a Phidias or Praxiteles, sense, I believe, will teach us. And yet that our own marble or stuff (whatever it be, of which we are composed) wears out in seven, or at the longest in twice seven years, the meanest anatomist can tell us. Now where, I beseech you, will that same one be found at last, supposing it to lie in the stuff itself, or any part of it? For when that is wholly spent, and not one particle of it left, we are ourselves still as much as before.

What you philosophers are, replied I, may be hard perhaps to determine, but for the rest of mankind, I dare affirm, that few are so long themselves as half seven years. 'Tis good fortune if a man be one and the same only for a day or two. A year makes more revolutions than can be numbered.

True, said he; but though this may happen to a man, and chiefly to one whose contrary vices set him at odds so often with himself, yet when he comes to suffer or be punished for those vices, he finds himself, if I mistake not, still one and the same. And you, Philocles, who, though you disown philosophy, are yet so true a proselyte to Pyrrhonism, should you at last, feeling the power of the Genius I preach, be wrought upon to own the divine hypothesis, and from this new turn of thought admit a total change in all your principles and opinions, yet would you be still the self-same Philocles, though better yet, if you will take my judgment, than the present one, as much as I love and value him. You see, therefore, there is a strange simplicity in this you and me, that in reality they should be still one and the same, when neither one atom of body, one passion, nor one thought remains the same. And for that poor endeavour of making out this sameness or identity of being, from some self-same matter or particle of matter, supposed to remain with us when all besides is changed, this is by so much the more contemptible, as that matter itself is not really capable of such simplicity. For I dare answer, you will allow this you and me to be each of us simply and individually one, better than you can allow the same to anything of mere matter, unless, quitting your inclination for scepticism, you fall so in love with the notion of an atom as to find it full as intelligible and certain to you as that you are yourself.

But whatever, continued Theocles, be supposed of uncompounded matter (a thing at best pretty difficult to conceive), yet being compounded and put together in a certain number of such parts as unite and conspire in these frames of ours, and others like them, if it can present us with so many innumerable instances of particular forms, who share this simple principle, by which they are really *One*, live, act, and have a nature or genius peculiar to themselves, and provident for their own welfare, how shall we at the same time overlook this in the whole, and deny the great and general ONE of the world? How can we be so unnatural as to disown divine Nature, our common parent, and refuse to recognise the universal and sovereign Genius?

Sovereigns, said I, require no notice to be taken of them when they pass *incognito*, nor any homage where they appear not in due form. We may even have reason to presume they should be displeased with us for being too officious in endeavouring to discover them when they keep themselves either wholly invisible or in very dark disguise. As for the notice we take of these invisible powers in the common way of our religion, we have our visible sovereigns to answer for us. Our lawful superiors teach us what we are to own and to perform in worship. And we are dutiful in complying with them and following their example. But in a philosophical way I find no warrant for our being such earnest recognisers of a controverted title. However it be, you must allow one at least to understand the controversy and know the nature of these powers described. May one not inquire "what substances they are of? whether material or immaterial?"

May one not on the other hand, replied Theocles, inquire as well "what substance, or which of these two substances, you count your real and proper self." Or would you rather be no substance, but choose to call yourself a mode or accident?

Truly, said I, as accidental as my life may be, or as random that humour is which governs it, I know nothing, after all, so real and substantial as myself. Therefore if there be that thing you call a substance, I take for granted I am one. But for anything further relating to this question, you know my sceptic principles; I determine neither way.

Allow me then, replied he, good Philocles, the same privilege of scepticism in this respect, since it concerns not the affair before us, which way we determine, or whether we come to any determination at all in this point. For be the difficulty ever so great, it stands the same, you may perceive, against your own being as against that which I am pretending to convince you of. You may raise what objections you please on either hand, and your dilemma may be of notable force against the manner of such a supreme Being's existence. But after you have done all, you will bring the same dilemma home to you, and be at a loss still about yourself when you have argued ever so long upon these metaphysical points of mode and substance, and have philosophically concluded from the difficulties of each hypothesis "that there cannot be in Nature such a universal One as this"; you must conclude from the same reasons "that there cannot be any such particular one as yourself." But that there is actually such a one as this latter, your own mind, 'tis hoped, may satisfy you. And of this mind 'tis enough to say "that it is something which acts upon a body, and has something passive under it and subject to it; that it has not only body or mere matter for its subject, but in some respect even itself too, and what proceeds from it; that it superintends and manages its own imaginations, appearances, fancies, correcting, working, and modelling these as it finds good, and adorning and accomplishing the best it can this composite order of body and understanding." Such a mind and governing part I know there is somewhere in the world. Let Pyrrho, by the help of such another, contradict me if he pleases. We have our several understandings and thoughts, however we came by them. Each understands and thinks the best he can for his own purpose; he for himself, I for another self. And who, I beseech you, for the whole? . . . No one? Nothing at all? . . . The world, perhaps, you suppose to be mere body, a mass of modified matter. The bodies of men are part therefore of this body. The imaginations, sensations, apprehensions of men are included in this body and inherent in it, produced out of it and resumed again into it, though the body, it seems, never dreams of it! The world itself is never the wiser for all the wit and wisdom it breeds! It has no apprehension at all of what is doing; no thought kept to itself, for its own proper use or purpose; not a single imagination or reflection by which to discover or be conscious of the manifold imaginations and inventions which it sets afoot and deals abroad with such an open hand! The goodly bulk, so prolific, kind, and yielding for every one else, has nothing left at last for its own share, having unhappily lavished all away! . . . By what chance? I would fain understand. "How? or by what necessity? . . . Who gives the law? . . . Who orders and distributes thus?" Nature, say you. And what is Nature? Is it sense? Is it a person? Has she reason or understanding? No. Who then understands for her, or is interested or concerned in her behalf? No one; not a soul. But every one for himself.

Come on then. Let us hear further, Is not this Nature still a self? Or tell me, I beseech you, how are you one? By what token? Or by virtue of what? "By a principle which joins certain parts, and which thinks and acts consonantly for the use and purpose of those parts." Say, therefore, what is your whole system a part of? Or is it, indeed, no part, but a whole, by itself, absolute, independent, and unrelated to anything besides? If it be indeed a part, and really related, to what else, I beseech you, than to the whole of Nature? Is there then such a uniting principle in Nature? If so, how are you then a self, and Nature not so? How have you something to understand and act for you, and Nature, who gave this understanding, nothing at all to understand for her, advise her, or help her out (poor being!) on any occasion, whatever necessity she may be in? Has the world such ill-fortune in the main? Are there so many particular understanding active principles everywhere? And is there nothing at last which thinks, acts, or understands for all? Nothing which administers or looks after all?

No (says one of a modern hypothesis), for the world was from eternity as you see it, and is no more than barely what you see: "Matter modified; a lump in motion, with here and there a thought or scattered portion of dissoluble intelligence." . . . No (says one of an ancienter hypothesis), for the world was once without any intelligence or thought at all: "Mere matter, chaos, and a play of atoms, till thought, by chance, came into play, and made up a harmony which was never designed or thought of." . . . Admirable conceit! Believe it who can. For my own share (thank Providence), I have a mind in my possession which serves, such as it is, to keep my body and its affections, my passions, appetites, imaginations, fancies, and the rest in tolerable harmony and order. But the order of the universe, I am persuaded still, is much the better of the two. Let Epicurus, if he please, think his the better, and, believing no genius or wisdom above his own, inform us by what chance 'twas dealt him, and how atoms came to be so wise.

In fine, continued Theocles (raising his voice and action), being thus, even by scepticism itself, convinced the more still of my own being and of this self of mine "that 'tis a real self drawn out and copied from another principal and original self (the Great One of the world)," I endeavour to be really one with it, and conformable to it as far as I am able. I consider that, as there is one general mass, one body of the whole, so to this body there is an order, to this order a mind; that to this general mind each particular one must have relation, as being of like substance (as much as we can understand of substance), alike active upon body, original to motion and order; alike simple, uncompounded, individual; of like energy, effect, and operation; and more like still, if it co-operates with it to general good, and strives to will according to the best of wills. So that it cannot surely but seem natural "that the particular mind should seek its happiness in conformity with the general one, and endeavour to resemble it in its highest simplicity and excellence."

Therefore, now, said I, good Theocles, be once again the enthusiast, and let me hear anew that divine song with which I was lately charmed. I am already got over my qualm, and begin better than ever to fancy such a nature as you speak of; insomuch that I find myself mightily in its interest, and concerned that all should go happily and well with it. Though at the rate it often runs, I can scarce help being in some pain on its account.

Fear not, my friend, replied he. For know that every particular nature certainly and constantly produces what is good to itself, unless something foreign disturbs or hinders it, either by overpowering and corrupting it within, or by violence from without. Thus Nature in the patient struggles to the last and strives to throw off the distemper. Thus even in these plants we see round us, every particular nature thrives and attains its perfection, if nothing from without obstructs it nor anything foreign has already impaired or wounded it; and even in this case it does its utmost still to redeem itself. What are all weaknesses, distortions, sicknesses, imperfect births, and the seeming contradictions and perversities of nature other than of this sort? And how ignorant must one be of all natural causes and operations to think that any of these disorders happen by a miscarriage of the particular nature, and not by the force of some foreign nature which overpowers it. If, therefore, every particular nature be thus constantly and unerringly true to itself, and certain to produce only what is good for itself and conducing to its own right state, shall not the general one, the nature of the whole, do full as much? shall that alone miscarry or fail? Or is there anything foreign which should at any time do violence upon it or force it out of its natural way? If not, then all it produces is to its own advantage and good, the good of all in general; and what is for the good of all in general is just and good.

'Tis so, said I, I confess.

Then you ought to rest satisfied, replied he; and not only so, but be pleased and rejoice at what happens, knowing whence it comes, and to what perfection it contributes.

Bless me, said I, Theocles, into what a superstition are you like to lead me! I thought it heretofore the mark of a superstitious mind to search for Providence in the common accidents of life, and ascribe to the Divine Power those common disasters and calamities which nature has entailed on mankind. But now I find I must place all in general to one account, and viewing things through a kind of magical glass, I am to see the worst of ills transformed to good, and admire equally whatever comes from one and the same perfect Hand. But no matter, I can surmount all. Go on, Theocles, and let me advise you in my own behalf, that since you have rekindled me, you do not by delaying give me time to cool again.

I would have you know, replied he, I scorn to take the advantage of a warm fit and be beholden to temper or imagination for gaining me your assent. Therefore ere I go yet a step farther, I am resolved to enter again into cool reason with you and ask if you admit for proof what I advanced yesterday upon that head, "of a universal union, coherence, or sympathising of things"?

By force of probability, said I, you overcame me. Being convinced of a consent and correspondence in all we saw of things, I considered it as unreasonable not to allow the same throughout.

Unreasonable indeed! replied he. For in the infinite residue, were there no principle of union, it would seem next to impossible that things within our sphere should be consistent and keep their order. "For what was infinite would be predominant."

It seems so.

Tell me then, said he, after this union owned, how you can refuse to allow the name of demonstration to the remaining arguments, which establish the government of a perfect mind.

Your solutions, said I, of the ill appearances are not perfect enough to pass for demonstration. And whatever seems vicious or imperfect in the creation puts a stop to further conclusions till the thing be solved.

Did you not then, said he, agree with me when I averred that the appearances must of necessity stand as they are, and things seem altogether as imperfect even on the concession of a perfect supreme mind existent?

I did so.

And is not the same reason good still? viz. "that in an infinity of things, mutually relative, a mind which sees not infinitely can see nothing fully, and must therefore frequently see that as imperfect which in itself is really perfect."

The reason is still good.

Are the appearances, then, any objection to our hypothesis?

None, whilst they remain appearances only.

Can you then prove them to be any more? For if you cannot, you prove nothing. And that it lies on you to prove you plainly see, since the appearances do not only agree with the hypothesis, but are a necessary consequence from it. To bid me prove, therefore, in this case is in a manner the same as to bid me be infinite. For nothing beside what is infinite can see infinite connections.

The presumption, I must confess, said I, by this reckoning is wholly on your side. Yet still this is only presumption.

Take demonstration then, said he, if you can endure I should reason thus abstractedly and drily. The appearances of ill, you say, are not necessarily that ill they represent to us.

I own it.

Therefore what they represent may possibly be good.

It may.

And therefore there may possibly be no real ill in things, but all may be perfectly concurrent to one interest, the interest of that universal One.

It may be so.

Why, then, if it may be so (be not surprised), "it follows that it must be so," on the account of that great unit and simple self-principle which you have granted in the whole. For whatever is possible in the whole, the nature or mind of the whole will put in execution for the whole's good; and if it be possible to exclude ill, it will exclude it. Therefore, since notwithstanding the appearances, 'tis possible that ill may actually be excluded, count upon it "that actually it is excluded." For nothing merely passive can oppose this universally active principle. If anything active oppose it, 'tis another principle. I allow it.

'Tis impossible. For were there in nature two or more principles, either they must agree or not. If they agree not, all must be confusion till one be predominant. If they agree, there must be some natural reason for their agreement, and this natural reason cannot be from chance, but from some particular design, contrivance, or thought, which brings us up again to One principle, and makes the other two to be subordinate. And thus when we have compared each of the three opinions, viz. "That there is no designing active principle; that there is more than one"; or "that finally there is but One," we shall perceive that the only consistent opinion is the last. And since one or other of these opinions must of necessity be true, what can we determine other than that the last is, and must be so, demonstrably? if it be demonstration, "that in three opinions, one of which must necessarily be true, two being plainly absurd, the third must be the truth."

Enough, said I, Theocles. My doubts are vanished. Malice and chance (vain phantoms!) have yielded to that all-prevalent wisdom which you have established. You are conqueror in the cool way of reason, and may with honour now grow warm again in your poetic vein. Return therefore, I entreat you, once more to that perfection of being, and address yourself to it as before on our approaches to these sylvan scenes where first it seemed to inspire you. I shall now no longer be in danger of imagining either magic or superstition in the case, since you invoke no other power than that single ONE which seems so natural.

Thus I continue then, said Theocles, addressing myself as you would have me, to that guardian deity and inspirer whom we are to imagine present here, but not here only. For, "O mighty Genius! sole animating and inspiring power! author and subject of these thoughts! thy influence is universal, and in all things thou art inmost. From thee depend their secret springs of action. Thou movest them with an irresistible unwearied force, by sacred and inviolable laws, framed for the good of each particular being, as best may suit with the perfection, life, and vigour of the whole. The vital principle is widely shared and infinitely varied, dispersed throughout, nowhere extinct. All lives, and by succession still revives. The temporary beings quit their borrowed forms and yield their elementary substance to new-comers. Called in their several turns to life, they view the light, and viewing pass, that others too may be spectators of the goodly scene, and greater numbers still enjoy the privilege of Nature. Munificent and great, she imparts herself to most and makes the subjects of her bounty infinite. Nought stays her hastening hand. No time nor substance is lost or unimproved. New forms arise, and when the old dissolve, the matter whence they were composed is not left useless, but wrought with equal management and art, even in corruption, Nature's seeming waste and vile abhorrence. The abject state appears merely as the way or passage to some better. But could we nearly view it, and with indifference, remote from the antipathy of sense, we then perhaps should highest raise our admiration, convinced that even the way itself was equal to the end. Nor can we judge less favourably of that consummate art exhibited through all the works of Nature, since our weak eyes, helped by mechanic art, discover in these works a hidden scene of wonders, worlds within worlds of infinite minuteness, though as to art still equal to the greatest, and pregnant with more wonders than the most discerning sense, joined with the greatest art or the acutest reason, can penetrate or unfold.

"But 'tis in vain for us to search the bulky mass of matter, seeking to know its nature; how great the whole itself, or even how small its parts.

"If, knowing only some of the rules of motion, we seek to trace it further, 'tis in vain we follow it into the bodies it has reached. Our tardy apprehensions fail us, and can reach nothing beyond the body itself, through which it is diffused. Wonderful being (if we may call it so), which bodies never receive except from others which lose it, nor ever lose, unless by imparting it to others. Even without change of place it has its force, and bodies big with motion labour to move, yet stir not, whilst they express an energy beyond our comprehension.

"In vain, too, we pursue that phantom time, too small, and yet too mighty for our grasp, when, shrinking to a narrow point, it escapes our hold, or mocks our scanty thought by swelling to eternity, an object unproportioned to our capacity, as is thy being, O thou ancient cause! older than time, yet young with fresh eternity.

"In vain we try to fathom the abyss of space, the seat of thy extensive being, of which no place is empty, no void which is not full.

"In vain we labour to understand that principle of sense and thought, which seeming in us to depend so much on motion, yet differs so much from it and from matter itself as not to suffer us to conceive how thought can more result from this than this arise from thought. But thought we own pre-eminent, and confess the realest of beings, the only existence of which we are made sure by being conscious. All else may be only dream and shadow. All which even sense suggests may be deceitful. The sense itself remains still; reason subsists, and thought maintains its eldership of being. Thus are we in a manner conscious of that original and eternally existent thought whence we derive our own. And thus the assurance we have of the existence of beings above our sense and of thee (the great exemplar of thy works) comes from thee, the all true and perfect, who hast thus communicated thyself more immediately to us, so as in some manner to inhabit within our souls, thou who art original soul, diffusive, vital in all, inspiriting the whole.

"All Nature's wonders serve to excite and perfect this idea of their author. 'Tis here he suffers us to see, and even converse with him in a manner suitable to our frailty. How glorious is it to contemplate him in this noblest of his works apparent to us, the system of the bigger world!"

Here I must own, 'twas no small comfort to me to find that, as our meditation turned, we were likely to get clear of an entangling abstruse philosophy. I was in hopes Theocles, as he proceeded, might stick closer to Nature, since he was now come upon the borders of our world. And here I would willingly have welcomed him, had I thought it safe at present to venture the least interruption.

"Besides the neighbouring planets (continued he, in his rapturous strain) what multitudes of fixed stars did we see sparkle not an hour ago in the clear night, which yet had hardly yielded to the day? How many others are discovered by the help of art? Yet how many remain still beyond the reach of our discovery! Crowded as they seem, their distance from each other is as unmeasurable by art as is the distance between them and us. Whence we are naturally taught the immensity of that being who, through these immense spaces, has disposed such an infinity of bodies, belonging each (as we may well presume) to systems as complete as our own world, since even the smallest spark of this bright galaxy may vie with this our sun, which shining now full out, gives us new life, exalts our spirits, and makes us feel divinity more present.

"Prodigious orb! bright source of vital heat, and spring of day! . . . Soft flame, yet how intense, how active! how diffusive, and how vast a substance; yet how collected thus within itself, and in a glowing mass confined to the centre of this planetary world! . . . Mighty being! brightest image and representative of the Almighty! supreme of the corporeal world! unperishing in grace, and of undecaying youth! fair, beautiful, and hardly mortal creature! By what secret ways dost thou receive the supplies which maintain thee still in such unwearied vigour and unexhausted glory; notwithstanding those externally emitted streams and that continual expense of vital treasures which enlighten and invigorate the surrounding worlds? . . .

"Around him all the planets, with this our earth, single, or with attendants, continually move, seeking to receive the blessing of his light and lively warmth! Towards him they seem to tend, with prone descent, as to their centre, but happily controlled still by another impulse, they keep their heavenly order; and in just numbers and exactest measure, go the eternal rounds.

But, O thou who art the author and modifier of these various motions! O sovereign and sole mover, by whose high art the rolling spheres are governed, and these stupendous bodies of our world hold their unrelenting courses! O wise economist, and powerful chief, whom all the elements and powers of Nature serve! how hast thou animated these moving worlds? what spirit or soul infused? what bias fixed? or how encompassed them in liquid ether, driving them as with the breath of living winds, thy active and unwearied ministers in this intricate and mighty work?

"Thus powerfully are the systems held entire, and kept from fatal interfering. Thus is our ponderous globe directed in its annual course, daily revolving on its own centre, whilst the obsequious moon with double labour, monthly surrounding this our bigger orb, attends the motion of her sister planet, and pays in common her circular homage to the sun.

"Yet is this mansion-globe, this man-container, of a much narrower compass even than other its fellow-wanderers of our system. How narrow then must it appear compared with the capacious system of its own sun? And how narrow, or as nothing, in respect of those innumerable systems of other suns? Yet how immense a body it seems compared with ours of human form, a borrowed remnant of its variable and oft-converted surface? though animated with a sublime celestial spirit by which we have relation and tendency to Thee our Heavenly Sire, centre of souls, to whom these spirits of ours by nature tend, as earthly bodies to their proper centre. O did they tend as unerringly and constantly! . . . But thou alone composest the disorders of the corporeal world, and from the restless and fighting elements raisest that peaceful concord and conspiring beauty of the ever-flourishing creation. Even so canst thou convert these jarring motions of intelligent beings, and in due time and manner cause them to find their rest; making them contribute to the good and perfection of the universe, thy all-good and perfect work."

Here again he broke off, looking on me as if he expected I should speak, which when he found plainly I would not, but continued still in a posture of musing thought: Why, Philocles! said he, with an air of wonder; what can this mean, that you should suffer me thus to run on without the least interruption? Have you at once given over your scrupulous philosophy, to let me range thus at pleasure through these aerial spaces and imaginary regions where my capricious fancy or easy faith has led me? I would have you to consider better, and know, my Philocles, that I had never trusted myself with you in this vein of enthusiasm, had I not relied on you to govern it a little better.

I find, then, said I (rousing myself from my musing posture), you expect I should serve you in the same capacity as that musician, whom an ancient orator made use of at his elbow, to strike such moving notes as raised him when he was perceived to sink; and calmed him again when his impetuous spirit was transported in too high a strain.

You imagine right, replied Theocles; and therefore I am resolved not to go on till you have promised to pull me by the sleeve when I grow extravagant. Be it so, said I; you have my promise. But how if instead of rising in my transports I should grow flat and tiresome; what lyre or instrument would you employ to raise me?

The danger, I told him, could hardly be supposed to lie on this hand. His vein was a plentiful one, and his enthusiasm in no likelihood of failing him. His subject, too, as well as his numbers, would bear him out. And with the advantage of the rural scene around us, his numbered prose, I thought, supplied the room of the best pastoral song. For in the manner I was now wrought up, 'twas as agreeable to me to hear him, in this kind of passion, invoke his stars and elements, as to hear one of those amorous shepherds complaining to his flock, and making the woods and rocks resound the name of her whom he adored. . . . Begin therefore, continued I, still pressing him, begin anew, and lead me boldly through your elements. Wherever there is danger, be it on either hand, I promise to give you warning when I perceive it.

Let us begin, then, said he, with this our element of earth, which yonder we see cultivated with such care by the early swains now working in the plain below—"Unhappy restless men, who first disdained these peaceful labours, gentle rural tasks, performed with such delight! What pride or what ambition bred this scorn? Hence all those fatal evils of your race, enormous luxury, despising homely fare, ranges through seas and lands, rifles the globe; and men, ingenious to their misery, work out for themselves the means of heavier labour, anxious cares, and sorrow. Not satisfied to turn and manure for their use the wholesome and beneficial mould of this their earth, they dig yet deeper, and seeking out imaginary wealth, they search its very entrails.

"Here, led by curiosity, we find minerals of different natures which, by their simplicity, discover no less of the divine art than the most compounded of nature's works. Some are found capable of surprising changes; others as durable, and hard to be destroyed or changed by fire, or utmost art. So various are the subjects of our contemplation, that even the study of these inglorious parts of nature in the nether world is able itself alone to yield large matter and employment for the busiest spirits of men, who in the labour of these experiments can willingly consume their lives. But the noisome poisonous steams which the earth breathes from these dark caverns where she conceals her treasures, suffer not prying mortals to live long in this search.

"How comfortable is it to those who come out hence alive to breathe a purer air! to see the rejoicing light of day! and tread the fertile ground! How gladly they contemplate the surface of the earth, their habitation, heated and enlivened by the sun, and tempered by the fresh air of fanning breezes! These exercise the resty plants, and scour the unactive globe. And when the sun draws hence thick clouded steams and vapours, 'tis only to digest and exalt the unwholesome particles, and commit them to the sprightly air, which, soon imparting its quick and vital spirit, renders them again with improvement to the earth in gentle breathings, or in rich dews and fruitful showers. The same air, moving about the mighty mass, enters its pores, impregnating the whole. And both the sun and air, conspiring to animate this mother-earth, that though ever breeding her vigour is as great, her beauty as fresh, and her looks as charming as if she newly came out of the forming hands of her creator.

"How beautiful is the water among the inferior earthly works! Heavy, liquid, and transparent, without the springing vigour and expansive force of air, but not without activity. Stubborn and unyielding when compressed, but placidly avoiding force, and bending every way with ready fluency! Insinuating, it dissolves the lumpish earth, frees the entangled bodies, procures their intercourse, and summons to the field the keen terrestrial particles, whose happy strifes, soon ending in strict union, produce the various forms which we behold. How vast are the abysses of the sea, where this soft element is stored; and whence the sun and winds extracting, raise it into clouds! These, soon converted into rain, water the thirsty ground, and supply afresh the springs and rivers, the comfort of the neighbouring plains, and sweet refreshment of all animals.

"But whither shall we trace the sources of the light? or in what ocean comprehend the luminous matter so wide diffused through the immense spaces which it fills? What seats shall we assign to that fierce element of fire, too active to be confined within the compass of the sun, and not excluded even the bowels of the heavy earth? The air itself submits to it, and serves as its inferior instrument. Even this our sun, with all those numerous suns, the glittering host of Heaven, seem to receive from hence the vast supplies which keep them ever in their splendid state. The invisible ethereal substance, penetrating both liquid and solid bodies, is diffused throughout the universe. It cherishes the cold dull massy globe, and warms it to its centre. It forms the minerals; gives life and growth to vegetables; kindles a soft, invisible, and vital flame in the breasts of living creatures; frames, animates, and nurses all the various forms; sparing, as well as employing for their use, those sulphurous and combustible matters of which they are composed. Benign and gentle amidst all, it still maintains this happy peace and concord, according to its stated and peculiar laws. But these once broken, the acquitted being takes its course unruled. It runs impetuous through the fatal breach, and breaking into visible and fierce flames, passes triumphant over the yielding forms, converting all into itself, and dissolving now those systems which itself before had formed. 'Tis thus" . . . .

Here Theocles stopped on a sudden, when (as he imagined) I was putting my hand out to lay hold on his sleeve.

O Philocles, said he, 'tis well remembered. I was growing too warm, I find ; as well I might indeed, in this hot element. And here perhaps I might have talked yet more mysteriously, had you been one who could think otherwise than in the common way of the soft flames of love. You might, perhaps, have heard wonders in this kind: "how all things had their being hence, and how their noblest end was to be here wrapt up, consumed and lost." But in these high flights I might possibly have gone near to burn my wings.

Indeed, said I, you might well expect the fate of Icarus for your high-soaring. But this, indeed, was not what I feared. For you were got above danger; and, with that devouring element on your side, had mastered not only the sun himself, but every thing which stood in your way. I was afraid it might, in the issue, run to what they tell us of a universal conflagration; in which I knew not how it might go, possibly, with our Genius.

I am glad, said he, Philocles, to find this grown such a concern with you. But you may rest secure here, if the case you meant were that periodical conflagration talked of by some philosophers. For there the Genius would of necessity be all in all; and in those intervals of creation, when no form nor species existed anywhere out of the divine mind, all then was Deity; all was that ONE, collected thus within itself, and subsisting (as they imagined) rather in a more simple and perfect manner, than when multiplied in more ways; and becoming productive, it unfolded itself in the various map of Nature and this fair visible world.

But for my part, said I (interrupting him), who can much better see divinity unfolded than in that involved and solitary state before creation, I could wish you would go a little further with me in the map of Nature, especially if, descending from your lofty flights, you would be content to pitch upon this humble spot of earth, where I could better accompany you, wherever you led me.

But you, replied he, who would confine me to this heavy earth, must yet allow me the same wings of fancy. How else shall I fly with you through different climates, from pole to pole, and from the frigid to the torrid zone?

Oh, said I, for this purpose I will allow you the Pegasus of the poets, or that winged Griffin which an Italian poet of the moderns gave to one of his heroes; yet on this condition, that you take no such extravagant flight, as his was, to the moon; but keep closely to this orb of earth.

Since you will have it so, replied Theocles, let us try first on the darkest and most imperfect parts of our map, and see how you can endure the prospect. "How oblique and faintly looks the sun on yonder climates, far removed from him! How tedious are the winters there! How deep the horrors of the night, and how uncomfortable even the light of day! The freezing winds employ their fiercest breath, yet are not spent with blowing. The sea, which elsewhere is scarce confined within its limits, lies here immured in walls of crystal. The snow covers the hills, and almost fills the lowest valleys. How wide and deep it lies, incumbent over the plains, hiding the sluggish rivers, the shrubs and trees, the dens of beasts and mansions of distressed and feeble men! . . . See! where they lie confined, hardly secure against the raging cold or the attacks of the wild beasts, now masters of the wasted field, and forced by hunger out of the naked woods. . . . Yet not disheartened (such is the force of human breasts) but thus provided for by art and prudence, the kind compensating gifts of heaven, men and their herds may wait for a release. For at length the sun, approaching, melts the snow, sets longing men at liberty, and affords them means and time to make provision against the next return of cold. It breaks the icy fetters of the main, where vast sea-monsters pierce through floating islands, with arms which can withstand the crystal rock; whilst others, who of themselves seem great as islands, are by their bulk alone armed against all but man, whose superiority over creatures of such stupendous size and force should make him mindful of his privilege of reason, and force him humbly to adore the great composer of these wondrous frames, and author of his own superior wisdom.

"But leaving these dull climates, so little favoured by the sun, for those happier regions, on which he looks more kindly, making perpetual summer; how great an alteration do we find? His purer light confounds weak-sighted mortals, pierced by his scorching beams. Scarce can they tread the glowing ground. The air they breathe cannot enough abate the fire which burns within their panting breasts. Their bodies melt; overcome and fainting they seek the shade, and wait the cool refreshments of the night. Yet oft the bounteous creator bestows other refreshments. He casts a veil of clouds before them and raises gentle gales; favoured by which the men and beasts pursue their labours, and plants refreshed by dews and showers can gladly bear the warmest sunbeams.

"And here the varying scene opens to new wonders. We see a country rich with gems, but richer with the fragrant spices it affords. How gravely move the largest of land creatures on the banks of this fair river! How ponderous are their arms, and vast their strength, with courage and a sense superior to the other beasts! Yet are they tamed (we see) by mankind, and brought even to fight their own battles, rather as allies and confederates than as slaves. . . . But let us turn our eyes towards these smaller and more curious objects, the numerous and devouring insects on the trees in these wide plains. How shining, strong, and lasting are the subtle threads spun from their artful mouths. Who, beside the all-wise, has taught them to compose the beautiful soft shells, in which recluse and buried, yet still alive, they undergo such a surprising change, when not destroyed by men, who clothe and adorn themselves with the labours and lives of these weak creatures, and are proud of wearing such inglorious spoils? How sumptuously apparelled, gay, and splendid are all the various insects which feed on the other plants of this warm region! How beautiful the plants themselves in all their various growths, from the triumphant palm down to the humble moss!

"Now may we see that happy country where precious gums and balsams flow from trees, and Nature yields her most delicious fruits. How tame and tractable, how patient of labour and of thrift are those large creatures, who, lifting up their lofty heads, go led and loaden through these dry and barren places! Their shape and temper show them framed by Nature to submit to man, and fitted for his service, who from hence ought to be more sensible of his wants and of the divine bounty thus supplying them.

"But see, not far from us, that fertilest of lands, watered and fed by a friendly generous stream, which, ere it enters the sea, divides itself into many branches, to dispense more equally the rich and nitrous manure it bestows so kindly and in due time on the adjacent plains. . . . Fair image of that fruitful and exuberant nature, who with a flood of bounty blesses all things, and, parent-like, out of her many breasts sends the nutritious draught in various streams to her rejoicing offspring! . . . Innumerable are the dubious forms and unknown species which drink the slimy current; whether they are such as, leaving the scorched deserts, satiate here their ardent thirst, and promiscuously engendering, beget a monstrous race; or whether (as it is said) by the sun's genial heat, active on the fermenting ooze, new forms are generated and issue from the river's fertile bed. . . . See there the noted tyrant of the flood and terror of its borders, when suddenly displaying his horrid form, the amphibious ravager invades the land, quitting his watery den, and from the deep emerging with hideous rush sweeps over the trembling plain. The natives from afar behold with wonder the enormous bulk, sprung from so small an egg. With horror they relate the monster's nature, cruel and deceitful; how he with dire hypocrisy and false tears beguiles the simple-hearted; and inspiring tenderness and kind compassion, kills with pious fraud. . . . Sad emblem of that spiritual plague, dire superstition! native of this soil, where first religion[1] grew unsociable, and among different worshippers bred mutual hatred and abhorrence of each other's temples. The infection spreads; and nations now profane one to another war fiercelier, and in religion's cause forget humanity: whilst savage zeal, with meek and pious semblance, works dreadful massacre; and for heaven's sake (horrid pretence!) makes desolate the earth. . . .

"Here let us leave these monsters (glad if we could here confine them!) and detesting the dire prolific soil, fly to the vast deserts of these parts. All ghastly and hideous as they appear, they want not their peculiar beauties. The wildness pleases. We seem to live alone with Nature. We view her in her inmost recesses, and contemplate her with more delight in these original wilds than in the artificial labyrinths and feigned wildernesses of the palace. The objects of the place, the scaly serpents, the savage beasts, and poisonous insects, how terrible soever, or how contrary to human nature, are beauteous in themselves, and fit to raise our thoughts in admiration of that divine wisdom, so far superior to our short views. Unable to declare the use or service of all things in this universe, we are yet assured of the perfection of all, and of the justice of that economy to which all things are subservient, and in respect of which things seemingly deformed are amiable, disorder becomes regular, corruption wholesome, and poisons (such as these we have seen) prove healing and beneficial.

"But behold! through a vast tract of sky before us, the mighty Atlas rears his lofty head covered with snow above the clouds. Beneath the mountain's foot the rocky country rises into hills, a proper basis of the ponderous mass above, where huge embodied rocks lie piled on one another, and seem to prop the high arch of heaven. . . . See! with what trembling steps poor mankind tread the narrow brink of the deep precipices, from whence with giddy horror they look down, mistrusting even the ground which bears them, whilst they hear the hollow sound of torrents underneath, and see the ruin of the impending rock, with falling trees which hang with their roots upwards and seem to draw more ruin after them. Here thoughtless men, seized with the newness of such objects, become thoughtful, and willingly contemplate the incessant changes of this earth's surface. They see, as in one instant, the revolutions of past ages, the fleeting forms of things, and the decay even of this our globe, whose youth and first formation they consider, whilst the apparent spoil and irreparable breaches of the wasted mountain show them the world itself only as a noble ruin, and make them think of its approaching period. . . . But here, mid-way the mountain, a spacious border of thick wood harbours our wearied travellers, who now are come among the ever green and lofty pines, the firs, and noble cedars, whose towering heads seem endless in the sky, the rest of the trees appearing only as shrubs beside them. And here a different horror seizes our sheltered travellers when they see the day diminished by the deep shades of the vast wood, which, closing thick above, spreads darkness and eternal night below. The faint and gloomy light looks horrid as the shade itself; and the profound stillness of these places imposes silence upon men, struck with the hoarse echoings of every sound within the spacious caverns of the wood. Here space astonishes; silence itself seems pregnant, whilst an unknown force works on the mind, and dubious objects move the wakeful sense. Mysterious voices are either heard or fancied, and various forms of deity seem to present themselves and appear more manifest in these sacred silvan scenes, such as of old gave rise to temples, and favoured the religion of the ancient world. Even we ourselves, who in plain characters may read divinity from so many bright parts of earth, choose rather these obscurer places to spell out that mysterious being, which to our weak eyes appears at best under a veil of cloud. . . ."

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[1] *Misc.* ii. ch. i.

Here he paused a while and began to cast about his eyes, which before seemed fixed. He looked more calmly, with an open countenance and free air, by which, and other tokens, I could easily find we were come to an end of our descriptions, and that whether I would or no, Theocles was now resolved to take his leave of the sublime, the morning being spent and the forenoon by this time well advanced.

Section II

Methinks, said he, Philocles (changing to a familiar voice), we had better leave these unsociable places whither our fancy has transported us, and return to ourselves here again in our more conversable woods and temperate climates. Here no fierce heats nor colds annoy us, no precipices nor cataracts amaze us. Nor need we here be afraid of our own voices whilst we hear the notes of such a cheerful choir, and find the echoes rather agreeable and inviting us to talk.

I confess, said I, those foreign nymphs (if there were any belonging to those miraculous woods) were much too awful beauties to please me. I found our familiar home-nymphs a great deal more to my humour. Yet for all this, I cannot help being concerned for your breaking off just when we were got half the world over, and wanted only to take America in our way home. Indeed, as for Europe, I could excuse your making any great tour there, because of the little variety it would afford us. Besides that, it would be hard to see it in any view without meeting still that politic face of affairs which would too much disturb us in our philosophical flights. But for the western tract, I cannot imagine why you should neglect such noble subjects as are there, unless perhaps the gold and silver, to which I find you such a bitter enemy, frighted you from a mother-soil so full of it. If these countries had been as bare of those metals as old Sparta, we might have heard more perhaps of the Perus and Mexicos than of all Asia and Africa. We might have had creatures, plants, woods, mountains, rivers, beyond any of those we have passed. How sorry am I to lose the noble Amazon! How sorry——

Here, as I would have proceeded, I saw so significant a smile on Theocles's face that it stopped me, out of curiosity, to ask him his thought.

Nothing, said he; nothing but this very subject itself. Go on—I see you'll finish it for me. The spirit of this sort of prophecy has seized you. And Philocles, the cold indifferent Philocles, is become a pursuer of the same mysterious beauty.

'Tis true, said I, Theocles, I own it. Your genius, the genius of the place, and the Great Genius have at last prevailed. I shall no longer resist the passion growing in me for things of a natural kind, where neither art nor the conceit or caprice of man has spoiled their genuine order by breaking in upon that primitive state. Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of the wilderness itself, as representing Nature more, will be the more engaging, and appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens. . . . But tell me, I entreat you, how comes it that, excepting a few philosophers of your sort, the only people who are enamoured in this way, and seek the woods, the rivers, or seashores, are your poor vulgar lovers?

Say not this, replied he, of lovers only. For is it not the same with poets, and all those other students in nature and the arts which copy after her? In short, is not this the real case of all who are lovers either of the Muses or the Graces?

However, said I, all those who are deep in this romantic way are looked upon, you know, as a people either plainly out of their wits, or overrun with melancholy and enthusiasm.[1]

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[1] See *Letter of Enthusiasm,* towards the end. See also above, *Inquiry,* bk. i. part iii. § 3; and *Misc.* ii. ch. 1.

We always endeavour to recall them from these solitary places. And I must own that often when I have found my fancy run this way, I have checked myself, not knowing what it was possessed me, when I was passionately struck with objects of this kind.

No wonder, replied he, if we are at a loss when we pursue the shadow for the substance. For if we may trust to what our reasoning has taught us, whatever in Nature is beautiful or charming is only the faint shadow of that first beauty. So that every real love depending on the mind, and being only the contemplation of beauty either as it really is in itself or as it appears imperfectly in the objects which strike the sense, how can the rational mind rest here, or be satisfied with the absurd enjoyment which reaches the sense alone?

From this time forward then, said I, I shall no more have reason to fear those beauties which strike a sort of melancholy, like the places we have named, or like these solemn groves. No more shall I avoid the moving accents of soft music, or fly from the enchanting features of the fairest human face.

If you are already, replied he, such a proficient in this new love that you are sure never to admire the representative beauty except for the sake of the original, nor aim at other enjoyment than of the rational kind, you may then be confident. I am so, and presume accordingly to answer for myself. However, I should not be ill satisfied if you explained yourself a little better as to this mistake of mine you seem to fear. Would it be any help to tell you, "That the absurdity lay in seeking the enjoyment elsewhere than in the subject loved"? The matter, I must confess, is still mysterious. Imagine then, good Philocles, if being taken with the beauty of the ocean, which you see yonder at a distance, it should come into your head to seek how to command it, and, like some mighty admiral, ride master of the sea, would not the fancy be a little absurd?

Absurd enough, in conscience. The next thing I should do, 'tis likely, upon this frenzy, would be to hire some bark and go in nuptial ceremony, Venetian-like, to wed the gulf, which I might call perhaps as properly my own.

Let who will call it theirs, replied Theocles, you will own the enjoyment of this kind to be very different from that which should naturally follow from the contemplation of the ocean's beauty. The bridegroom-Doge, who in his stately Bucentaur floats on the bosom of his Thetis, has less possession than the poor shepherd, who from a hanging rock or point of some high promontory, stretched at his ease, forgets his feeding flocks, while he admires her beauty. But to come nearer home, and make the question still more familiar. Suppose (my Philocles) that, viewing such a tract of country as this delicious vale we see beneath us, you should, for the enjoyment of the prospect, require the property or possession of the land.

The covetous fancy, replied I, would be as absurd altogether as that other ambitious one.

O Philocles! said he, may I bring this yet a little nearer, and will you follow me once more? Suppose that, being charmed as you seem to be with the beauty of those trees under whose shade we rest, you should long for nothing so much as to taste some delicious fruit of theirs; and having obtained of Nature some certain relish by which these acorns or berries of the wood became as palatable as the figs or peaches of the garden, you should afterwards, as oft as you revisited these groves, seek hence the enjoyment of them by satiating yourself in these new delights.

The fancy of this kind, replied I, would be sordidly luxurious, and as absurd, in my opinion, as either of the former.

Can you not then, on this occasion, said he, call to mind some other forms of a fair kind among us, where the admiration of beauty is apt to lead to as irregular a consequence?

I feared, said I, indeed, where this would end, and was apprehensive you would force me at last to think of certain powerful forms in human kind which draw after them a set of eager desires, wishes, and hopes; no way suitable, I must confess, to your rational and refined contemplation of beauty. The proportions of this living architecture, as wonderful as they are, inspire nothing of a studious or contemplative kind. The more they are viewed, the further they are from satisfying by mere view. Let that which satisfies be ever so disproportionable an effect, or ever so foreign to its cause, censure it as you please, you must allow, however, that it is natural. So that you, Theocles, for aught I see, are become the accuser of Nature by condemning a natural enjoyment.

Far be it from us both, said he, to condemn a joy which is from Nature. But when we spoke of the enjoyment of these woods and prospects, we understood by it a far different kind from that of the inferior creatures, who, rifling in these places, find here their choicest food. Yet we too live by tasteful food, and feel those other joys of sense in common with them. But 'twas not here (my Philocles) that we had agreed to place our good, nor consequently our enjoyment. We who were rational, and had minds, methought, should place it rather in those minds which were indeed abused, and cheated of their real good, when drawn to seek absurdly the enjoyment of it in the objects of sense, and not in those objects they might properly call their own, in which kind, as I remember, we comprehended all which was truly fair, generous, or good.

So that beauty, said I, and good with you, Theocles, I perceive, are still [1] one and the same.

'Tis so, said he. And thus are we returned again to the subject of our yesterday's morning conversation. Whether I have made good my promise to you in showing [2] the true good, I know not. But so, doubtless, I should have done with good success had I been able in my poetic ecstasies, or by any other efforts, to have led you into some deep view of Nature and the sovereign genius. We then had proved the force of divine beauty, and formed in ourselves an object capable and worthy of real enjoyment.

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[1] *Moralists,* part ii. § 1.

[2] *Ib.*

O Theocles! said I, well do I remember now the terms in which you engaged me that morning when you bespoke my love of this mysterious beauty. You have indeed made good your part of the condition, and may now claim me for a proselyte. If there be any seeming extravagance in the case I must comfort myself the best I can, and consider that all sound love and admiration is enthusiasm:[1] "The transports of poets, the sublime of orators, the rapture of musicians, the high strains of the virtuosi—all mere enthusiasm! Even learning itself, the love of arts and curiosities, the spirit of travellers and adventurers, gallantry, war, heroism—all, all enthusiasm!" 'Tis enough; I am content to be this new enthusiast in a way unknown to me before.

And I, replied Theocles, am content you should call this love of ours enthusiasm, allowing it the privilege of its fellow-passions. For is there a fair and plausible enthusiasm, a reasonable ecstasy and transport allowed to other subjects, such as architecture, painting, music; and shall it be exploded here? Are there senses by which all those other graces and perfections are perceived, and none by which this higher perfection and grace is comprehended? Is it so preposterous to bring that enthusiasm hither, and transfer it from those secondary and scanty objects to this original and comprehensive one? Observe how the case stands in all those other subjects of art or science. What difficulty to be in any degree knowing! How long ere a true taste is gained! How many things shocking, how many offensive at first, which afterwards are known and acknowledged the highest beauties! For 'tis not instantly we acquire the sense by which these beauties are discoverable. Labour and pains are required, and time to cultivate a natural genius ever so apt or forward. But who is there once thinks of cultivating this soil, or of improving any sense or faculty which Nature may have given of this kind? And is it a wonder we should be dull then, as we are, confounded and at a loss in these affairs, blind as to this higher scene, these nobler representations? Which way should we come to understand better? which way be knowing in these beauties? Is study, science, or learning necessary to understand all beauties else? And for the sovereign beauty, is there no skill or science required? In painting there are shades and masterly strokes which the vulgar understand not, but find fault with; in architecture there is the rustic; in music the chromatic kind, and skilful mixture of dissonancies: and is there nothing which answers to this in the whole?

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[1] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, towards the end.

I must confess, said I, I have hitherto been one of those vulgar who could never relish the shades, the rustic, or the dissonancies you talk of. I have never dreamt of such masterpieces in Nature. 'Twas my way to censure freely on the first view. But I perceive I am now obliged to go far in the pursuit of beauty, which lies very absconded and deep; and if so, I am well assured that my enjoyments hitherto have been very shallow. I have dwelt, it seems, all this while upon the surface, and enjoyed only a kind of slight superficial beauties, having never gone in search of beauty itself, but of what I fancied such. Like the rest of the unthinking world, I took for granted that what I liked was beautiful, and what I rejoiced in was my good. I never scrupled loving what I fancied, and aiming only at the enjoyment of what I loved; I never troubled myself with examining what the subjects were, nor ever hesitated about their choice.

Begin then, said he, and choose. See what the subjects are, and which you would prefer, which honour with your admiration, love, and esteem. For by these again you will be honoured in your turn. Such, Philocles, as is the worth of these companions, such will your worth be found. As there is emptiness or fulness here, so will there be in your enjoyment. See therefore where fulness is, and where emptiness. See in what subject resides the chief excellence, where beauty reigns, where 'tis entire, perfect, absolute; where broken, imperfect, short. View these terrestrial beauties and whatever has the appearance of excellence and is able to attract. See that which either really is, or stands as in the room of fair, beautiful, and good. "A mass of metal, a tract of land, a number of slaves, a pile of stones, a human body of certain lineaments and proportions." Is this the highest of the kind? Is beauty founded then in body only, and not in action, life, or operation? . . .

Hold! hold! said I, good Theocles, you take this in too high a key above my reach. If you would have me accompany you, pray lower this strain a little, and talk in a more familiar way.

Thus then, said he (smiling), whatever passion you may have for other beauties, I know, good Philocles, you are no such admirer of wealth in any kind as to allow much beauty to it, especially in a rude heap or mass. But in medals, coins, embossed work, statues, and well-fabricated pieces, of whatever sort, you can discover beauty and admire the kind. True, said I, but not for the metal's sake. 'Tis not then the metal or matter which is beautiful with you? No. But the art? Certainly. The art then is the beauty? Right. And the art is that which beautifies? The same. So that the beautifying, not the beautified, is the really beautiful? It seems so. For that which is beautified, is beautiful only by the accession of something beautifying, and by the recess or withdrawing of the same, it ceases to be beautiful? Be it. In respect of bodies therefore, beauty comes and goes? So we see. Nor is the body itself any cause either of its coming or staying? None. So that there is no principle of beauty in body? None at all. For body can no way be the cause of beauty to itself? No way. Nor govern nor regulate itself? Nor yet this. Nor mean nor intend itself? Nor this neither. Must not that, therefore, which means and intends for it, regulates and orders it, be the principle of beauty to it? Of necessity. And what must that be? Mind, I suppose, for what can it be else?

Here then, said he, is all I would have explained to you before. "That the beautiful, the fair, the comely, were never in the matter, but in the art and design; never in body itself, but in the form or forming power." Does not the beautiful form confess this, and speak the beauty of the design whenever it strikes you? What is it but the design which strikes? What is it you admire but mind, or the effect of mind? 'Tis mind alone which forms. All which is void of mind is horrid, and matter formless is deformity itself.

Of all forms then, said I, those (according to your scheme) are the most amiable, and in the first order of beauty, which have a power of making other forms themselves. From whence methinks they may be styled the forming forms. So far I can easily concur with you, and gladly give the advantage to the human form, above those other beauties of man's formation. The palaces, equipages and estates shall never in my account be brought in competition with the original living forms of flesh and blood. And for the other, the dead forms of Nature, the metals and stones, however precious and dazzling, I am resolved to resist their splendour, and make abject things of them, even in their highest pride, when they pretend to set off human beauty, and are officiously brought in aid of the fair.

Do you not see then, replied Theocles, that you have established three degrees or orders of beauty? As how? Why first, the dead forms, as you properly have called them, which bear a fashion, and are formed, whether by man or Nature, but have no forming power, no action, or intelligence. Right. Next, and as the second kind, the forms which form, that is, which have intelligence, action, and operation. Right still. Here therefore is double beauty. For here is both the form (the effect of mind) and mind itself. The first kind low and despicable in respect of this other, from whence the dead form receives its lustre and force of beauty. For what is a mere body, though a human one, and ever so exactly fashioned, if inward form be wanting, and the mind be monstrous or imperfect, as in an idiot or savage? This too I can apprehend, said I, but where is the third order?

Have patience, replied he, and see first whether you have discovered the whole force of this second beauty. How else should you understand the force of love, or have the power of enjoyment? Tell me, I beseech you, when first you named these the forming forms, did you think of no other productions of theirs besides the dead kinds, such as the palaces, the coins, the brazen or the marble figures of men? Or did you think of something nearer life?

I could easily, said I, have added, that these forms of ours had a virtue of producing other living forms like themselves. But this virtue of theirs, I thought, was from another form above them, and could not properly be called their virtue or art, if in reality there was a superior art or something artist-like, which guided their hand, and made tools of them in this specious work.

Happily thought, said he; you have prevented a censure which I hardly imagined you could escape. And here you have unawares discovered that third order of beauty, which forms not only such as we call mere forms but even the forms which form. For we ourselves are notable architects in matter, and can show lifeless bodies brought into form, and fashioned by our own hands, but that which fashions even minds themselves, contains in itself all the beauties fashioned by those minds, and is consequently the principle, source, and fountain of all beauty.

It seems so.

Therefore whatever beauty appears in our second order of forms, or whatever is derived or produced from thence, all this is eminently, principally, and originally in this last order of supreme and sovereign beauty.

True.

Thus architecture, music, and all which is of human invention, resolves itself into this last order.

Right, said I; and thus all the enthusiasms of other kinds resolve themselves into ours. The fashionable kinds borrow from us, and are nothing without us. We have undoubtedly the honour of being originals.

Now therefore say again, replied Theocles: whether are those fabrics of architecture, sculpture, and the rest of that sort the greatest beauties which man forms, or are there greater and better? None which I know, replied I. Think, think again, said he; and setting aside those productions which just now you excepted against, as masterpieces of another hand; think what there are which more immediately proceed from us, and may more truly be termed our issue. I am barren, said I, for this time; you must be plainer yet, in helping me to conceive. How can I help you? replied he. Would you have me be conscious for you, of that which is immediately your own, and is solely in and from yourself? You mean my sentiments, said I. Certainly, replied he, and together with your sentiments, your resolutions, principles, determinations, actions; whatsoever is handsome and noble in the kind; whatever flows from your good understanding, sense, knowledge, and will; whatever is engendered in your heart (good Philocles!) or derives itself from your parent-mind, which, unlike to other parents, is never spent or exhausted, but gains strength and vigour by producing. So you, my friend, have proved it, by many a work, not suffering that fertile part to remain idle and unactive. Hence those good parts, which from a natural genius you have raised by due improvement. And here, as I cannot but admire the pregnant genius and parent-beauty, so am I satisfied of the offspring, that it is and will be ever beautiful.

I took the compliment, and wished (I told him) the case were really as he imagined, that I might justly merit his esteem and love. My study therefore should be to grow beautiful, in his way of beauty, and from this time forward I would do all I could to propagate that lovely race of mental children, happily sprung from such a high enjoyment and from a union with what was fairest and best. But 'tis you, Theocles, continued I, must help my labouring mind, and be as it were the midwife to those conceptions; which else, I fear, will prove abortive.

You do well, replied he, to give me the midwife's part only; for the mind conceiving of itself, can only be, as you say, assisted in the birth. Its pregnancy is from its nature. Nor could it ever have been thus impregnated by any other mind than that which formed it at the beginning; and which, as we have already proved, is original to all mental as well as other beauty.

Do you maintain then, said I, that these mental children, the notions and principles of fair, just, and honest, with the rest of these ideas, are innate?

Anatomists, said he, tell us that the eggs, which are principles in body, are innate, being formed already in the fœtus before the birth. But when it is, whether before, or at, or after the birth, or at what time after, that either these or other principles, organs of sensation, or sensations themselves, are first formed in us, is a matter, doubtless, of curious speculation, but of no great importance. The question is, whether the principles spoken of are from art or Nature? If from Nature purely, 'tis no matter for the time; nor would I contend with you though you should deny life itself to be innate, as imagining it followed rather than preceded the moment of birth. But this I am certain of, that life and the sensations which accompany life, come when they will, are from mere Nature, and nothing else. Therefore if you dislike the word innate, let us change it, if you will, for instinct, and call instinct that which Nature teaches, exclusive of art, culture, or discipline.

Content, said I.

Leaving then, replied he, those admirable speculations to the virtuosi, the anatomists, and school divines, we may safely aver, with all their consents, that the several organs, particularly those of generation, are formed by Nature. Whether is there also from Nature, think you, any instinct for the after use of them? or whether must learning and experience imprint this use? 'Tis imprinted, said I, enough in conscience. The impression or instinct is so strong in the case, that 'twould be absurdity not to think it natural, as well in our own species as in other creatures, amongst whom (as you have already taught me) not only the mere engendering of the young, but the various and almost infinite means and methods of providing for them, are all foreknown. For thus much we may indeed discern in the preparatory labours and arts of these wild creatures, which demonstrate their anticipating fancies, pre-conceptions, or pre-sensations, if I may use a word you taught me yesterday.[1]

I allow your expression, said Theocles, and will endeavour to show you that the same pre-conceptions, of a higher degree, have place in human kind. Do so, said I, I entreat you; for so far am I from finding in myself these pre-conceptions of fair and beautiful, in your sense, that methinks, till now of late, I have hardly known of anything like them in Nature. How then, said he, would you have known that outward fair and beautiful of human kind, if such an object (a fair fleshly one) in all its beauty had for the first time appeared to you, by yourself, this morning, in these groves? Or do you think perhaps you should have been unmoved, and have found no difference between this form and any other, if first you had not been instructed?

I have hardly any right, replied I, to plead this last opinion, after what I have owned just before.

Well then, said he, that I may appear to take no advantage against you, I quit the dazzling form which carries such a force of complicated beauties, and am contented to consider separately each of those simple beauties, which taken all together create this wonderful effect. For you will allow, without doubt, that in respect of bodies, whatever is commonly said of the unexpressible, the unintelligible, the I-know-not-what of beauty, there can lie no mystery here, but what plainly belongs either to figure, colour, motion or sound. Omitting therefore the three latter, and their dependent charms, let us view the charm in what is simplest of all, mere figure. Nor need we go so high as sculpture, architecture, or the designs of those who from this study of beauty have raised such delightful arts. 'Tis enough if we consider the simplest of figures, as either a round ball, a cube, or dye. Why is even an infant pleased with the first view of these proportions? Why is the sphere or globe, the cylinder and obelisk preferred; and the irregular figures, in respect of these, rejected and despised?

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[1] P. 76.

I am ready, replied I, to own there is in certain figures a natural beauty,[1] which the eye finds as soon as the object is presented to it.

Is there then, said he, a natural beauty of figures? and is there not as natural a one of actions? No sooner the eye opens upon figures, the ear to sounds, than straight the beautiful results and grace and harmony are known and acknowledged. No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned (and they are most of them as soon discerned as felt) than straight an inward eye distinguishes, and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious, or the despicable. How is it possible therefore not to own "that as these distinctions have their foundation in Nature, the discernment itself is natural, and from Nature alone"?

If this, I told him, were as he represented it, there could never, I thought, be any disagreement among men concerning actions and behaviour, as which was base, which worthy; which handsome, and which deformed. But now we found perpetual variance among mankind, whose differences were chiefly founded on this disagreement in opinion; "The one affirming, the other denying that this, or that, was fit or decent."

Even by this, then, replied he, it appears there is fitness and decency in actions; since the fit and decent is in this controversy ever pre-supposed. And whilst men are at odds about the subjects, the thing itself is universally agreed. For neither is there agreement in judgments about other beauties.

[1] *Inquiry*, bk. i. part ii. § 3.

'Tis controverted "which is the finest pile, the loveliest shape or face": but without controversy 'tis allowed "there is a beauty of each kind." This no one goes about to teach: nor is it learnt by any, but confessed by all. All own the standard, rule, and measure: but in applying it to things disorder arises, ignorance prevails, interest and passion breed disturbance. Nor can it otherwise happen in the affairs of life, whilst that which interests and engages men as good, is thought different from that which they admire and praise as honest. But with us, Philocles, 'tis better settled, since for our parts we have already decreed "that beauty and good are still the same."

I remember, said I, what you forced me to acknowledge more than once before. And now, good Theocles, that I am become so willing a disciple, I want not so much to be convinced, methinks, as to be confirmed and strengthened. And I hope this last work may prove your easiest task.

Not unless you help in it yourself, replied Theocles, for this is necessary as well as becoming. It had been indeed shameful for you to have yielded without making good resistance. To help oneself to be convinced is to prevent reason, and bespeak error and delusion. But upon fair conviction to give our heart up to the evident side, and reinforce the impression, this is to help reason heartily. And thus we may be said honestly to persuade ourselves. Show me then how I may best persuade myself.

Have courage, said he, Philocles (raising his voice), be not offended that I say, have courage! 'Tis cowardice alone betrays us. For whence can false shame be, except from cowardice? To be ashamed of what one is sure can never be shameful, must needs be from the want of resolution. We seek the right and wrong in things; we examine what is honourable, what shameful; and having at last determined, we dare not stand to our own judgment, and are ashamed to own there is really a shameful and an honourable. "Hear me" (says one who pretends to value Philocles, and be valued by him), "there can be no such thing as real valuableness or worth; nothing in itself estimable or amiable, odious or shameful. All is opinion. 'Tis opinion which makes beauty, and unmakes it. The graceful or ungraceful in things, the decorum and its contrary, the amiable and unamiable, vice, virtue, honour, shame, all this is founded in opinion only. Opinion is the law and measure. Nor has opinion any rule besides mere chance, which varies it, as custom varies; and makes now this, now that, to be thought worthy, according to the reign of fashion and the ascendant power of education." What shall we say to such a one? How represent to him his absurdity and extravagance? Will he desist the sooner? Or shall we ask, what shame, of one who acknowledges no shameful? Yet he derides, and cries, ridiculous! By what right? what title? For thus, if I were Philocles, would I defend myself: "Am I ridiculous? As how? What is ridiculous? Everything? or nothing?" Ridiculous indeed! But something, then, something there is ridiculous; and the notion, it seems, is right, "of a shameful and ridiculous in things."

How then shall we apply the notion? For this being wrong applied, cannot itself but be ridiculous. Or will he who cries shame refuse to acknowledge any in his turn? Does he not blush, nor seem discountenanced on any occasion? If he does, the case is very distinct from that of mere grief or fear. The disorder he feels is from a sense of what is shameful and odious in itself, not of what is hurtful or dangerous in its consequences. For the greatest danger in the world can never breed shame; nor can the opinion of all the world compel us to it, where our own opinion is not a party. We may be afraid of appearing impudent, and may therefore feign a modesty. But we can never really blush for anything beside what we think truly shameful, and what we should still blush for were we ever so secure as to our interest, and out of the reach of all inconvenience which could happen to us from the thing we were ashamed of.

Thus, continued he, should I be able by anticipation to defend myself, and looking narrowly into men's lives, and that which influenced them on all occasions, I should have testimony enough to make me say within myself, "Let who will be my adversary in this opinion, I shall find him some way or other prepossessed with that of which he would endeavour to dispossess me." Has he gratitude or resentment, pride or shame? Whichever way it be, he acknowledges a sense of just and unjust, worthy and mean. If he be grateful or expects gratitude, I ask "why? and on what account?" If he be angry, if he indulges revenge, I ask "how? and in what case? Revenged of what? of a stone, or madman?" Who is so mad? "But for what? For a chance hurt? an accident against thought or intention?" Who is so unjust? Therefore there is just and unjust; and belonging to it a natural presumption or anticipation on which the resentment or anger is founded. For what else should make the wickedest of mankind often prefer the interest of their revenge to all other interests, and even to life itself, except only a sense of wrong natural to all men, and a desire to prosecute that wrong at any rate? Not for their own sakes, since they sacrifice their very being to it, but out of hatred to the imagined wrong and from a certain love of justice, which even in unjust men is by this example shown to be beyond the love of life itself.

Thus as to pride, I ask, "why proud? why conceited? and of what? Does any one who has pride think meanly or indifferently of himself?" No; but honourably. And how this, if there be no real honour or dignity pre-supposed? For self-valuation supposes self-worth; and in a person conscious of real worth, is either no pride, or a just and noble one. In the same manner self-contempt supposes a self-meanness or defectiveness; and may be either a just modesty or unjust humility. But this is certain, that whoever is proud must be proud of something. And we know that men of thorough pride will be proud even in the meanest circumstances, and when there is no visible subject for them to be proud of. But they descry a merit in themselves which others cannot: and 'tis this merit they admire. No matter whether it be really in them, as they imagine, it is a worth still, an honour or merit which they admire, and would do, wherever they saw it, in any subject besides. For then it is, then only, that they are humbled, "when they see in a more eminent degree in others what they respect and admire so much in themselves." And thus as long as I find men either angry or revengeful, proud or ashamed, I am safe. For they conceive an honourable and dishonourable, a foul and fair, as well as I. No matter where they place it, or how they are mistaken in it, this hinders not my being satisfied "that the thing is, and is universally acknowledged; that it is of nature's impression, naturally conceived, and by no art or counter-nature to be eradicated or destroyed."

And now, what say you, Philocles (continued he), to this defence I have been making for you? 'Tis grounded, as you see, on the supposition of your being deeply engaged in this philosophical cause. But perhaps you have yet many difficulties to get over, ere you can so far take part with beauty as to make this to be your good.

I have no difficulty so great, said I, as not to be easily removed. My inclinations lead me strongly this way, for I am ready enough to yield there is no real good beside the enjoyment of beauty. And I am as ready, replied Theocles, to yield there is no real enjoyment of beauty beside what is good. Excellent! but upon reflection I fear I am little beholden to you for your concession. As how? Because should I offer to contend for any enjoyment of beauty out of your mental way, you would, I doubt, call such enjoyment of mine absurd, as you did once before. Undoubtedly I should. For what is it should enjoy or be capable of enjoyment, except mind? or shall we say, body enjoys? By the help of sense, perhaps, not otherwise. Is beauty, then, the object of sense? Say how? Which way? For otherwise the help of sense is nothing in the case; and if body be of itself incapable, and sense no help to it to apprehend or enjoy beauty, there remains only the mind which is capable either to apprehend or to enjoy.

True, said I, but show me, then, "Why beauty may not be the object of the sense?" Show me first, I entreat you, "Why, where, or in what you fancy it may be so?" Is it not beauty which first excites the sense, and feeds it afterwards in the passion we call love? Say in the same manner, "That it is beauty first excites the sense, and feeds it afterwards in the passion we call hunger." . . . You will not say it. The thought, I perceive, displeases you. As great as the pleasure is of good eating, you disdain to apply the notion of beauty to the good dishes which create it. You would hardly have applauded the preposterous fancy of some luxurious Romans of old, who could relish a fricassee the better for hearing it was composed of birds which wore a beautiful feather or had sung deliciously. Instead of being incited by such a historical account of meats, you would be apt, I believe, to have less appetite the more you searched their origin, and descended into the kitchen science, to learn the several forms and changes they had undergone ere they were served at this elegant voluptuous table. But though the kitchen forms be ever so disgraceful, you will allow that the materials of the kitchen, such, for instance, as the garden furnishes, are really fair and beautiful in their kind. Nor will you deny beauty to the wild field, or to these flowers which grow around us on this verdant couch. And yet, as lovely as are these forms of Nature, the shining grass or silvered moss, the flowery thyme, wild rose or honeysuckle; 'tis not their beauty allures the neighbouring herds, delights the browsing fawn or kid, and spreads the joy we see amidst the feeding flocks; 'tis not the form rejoices, but that which is beneath the form; 'tis savouriness attracts, hunger impels, and thirst better allayed by the clear brook than the thick puddle, makes the fair nymph to be preferred, whose form is otherwise slighted. For never can the form be of real force where it is uncontemplated, unjudged of, unexamined, and stands only as the accidental note or token of what appeases provoked sense, and satisfies the brutish part. Are you persuaded of this, good Philocles? or, rather than not give brutes the advantage of enjoyment, will you allow them also a mind and rational part?

Not so, I told him.

If brutes, therefore, said he, be incapable of knowing and enjoying beauty, as being brutes, and having sense only (the brutish part) for their own share, it follows "that neither can man by the same sense or brutish part conceive or enjoy beauty; but all the beauty and good he enjoys is in a nobler way, and by the help of what is noblest, his mind and reason." Here lies his dignity and highest interest, here his capacity toward good and happiness. His ability or incompetency, his power of enjoyment or his impotence, is founded in this alone. As this is sound, fair, noble, worthy, so are its subjects, acts and employments. For as the riotous mind, captive to sense, can never enter in competition, or contend for beauty with the virtuous mind of reason's culture; so neither can the objects which allure the former compare with those which attract and charm the latter. And when each gratifies itself in the enjoyment and possession of its object, how evidently fairer are the acts which join the latter pair, and give a soul the enjoyment of what is generous and good? This at least, Philocles, you will surely allow, that when you place a joy elsewhere than in the mind, the enjoyment itself will be no beautiful subject, nor of any graceful or agreeable appearance. But when you think how friendship is enjoyed, how honour, gratitude, candour, benignity, and all internal beauty; how all the social pleasures, society itself, and all which constitutes the worth and happiness of mankind; you will here surely allow beauty in the act, and think it worthy to be viewed and passed in review often by the glad mind, happily conscious of the generous part, and of its own advancement and growth in beauty.

Thus, Philocles (continued he, after a short pause), thus have I presumed to treat of beauty before so great a judge, and such a skilful admirer as yourself. For, taking rise from Nature's beauty, which transported me, I gladly ventured further in the chase, and have accompanied you in search of beauty, as it relates to us, and makes our highest good in its sincere and natural enjoyment. And if we have not idly spent our hours, nor ranged in vain through these deserted regions, it should appear from our strict search that there is nothing so divine as beauty, which belonging not to body, nor having any principle or existence except in mind and reason, is alone discovered and acquired by this diviner part, when it inspects itself, the only object worthy of itself. For whatever is void of mind, is void and darkness to the mind's eye. This languishes and grows dim whenever detained on foreign subjects, but thrives and attains its natural vigour when employed in contemplation of what is like itself. 'Tis thus the improving mind, slightly surveying other objects, and passing over bodies and the common forms (where only a shadow of beauty rests), ambitiously presses onward to its source, and views the original of form and order in that which is intelligent. And thus, O Philocles, may we improve and become artists in the kind; learning "to know ourselves, and what that is, which by improving, we may be sure to advance our worth and real self-interest." For neither is this knowledge acquired by contemplation of bodies, or the outward forms, the view of pageantries, the study of estates and honours; nor is he to be esteemed that self-improving artist who makes a fortune out of these, but he (he only) is the wise and able man, who with a slight regard to these things, applies himself to cultivate another soil, builds in a different matter from that of stone or marble; and having righter models in his eye, becomes in truth the architect of his own life and fortune, by laying within himself the lasting and sure foundations of order, peace, and concord. . . . But now 'tis time to think of returning home. The morning is far spent. Come!

let us away and leave these uncommon subjects, till we retire again to these remote and unfrequented places.

At these words Theocles, mending his pace, and going down the hill, left me at a good distance, till he heard me calling earnestly after him. Having joined him once again, I begged he would stay a little longer, or if he were resolved so soon to leave both the woods and that philosophy which he confined to them, that he would let me, however, part with them more gradually, and leave the best impression on me he could against my next return. For as much convinced as I was, and as great a convert to his doctrine, my danger still, I owned to him, was very great, and I foresaw that when the charm of these places and his company was ceased, I should be apt to relapse and weakly yield to that too powerful charm, the world. Tell me, continued I, how is it possible to hold out against it and withstand the general opinion of mankind, who have so different a notion of that which we call good? Say truth now, Theocles, can anything be more odd or dissonant from the common voice of the world than what we have determined in this matter?

Whom shall we follow, then? replied he. Whose judgment or opinion shall we take concerning what is good, what contrary? If all or any part of mankind are consonant with themselves, and can agree in this, I am content to leave philosophy and follow them. If otherwise, why should we not adhere to what we have chosen? . . . Let us, then, in another view consider how this matter stands.

SECTION III

We then walked gently homewards (it being almost noon), and he continued his discourse.

One man, said he, affects the hero, esteems it the highest advantage of life to have seen war and been in action in the field. Another laughs at this humour, counts it all extravagance and folly, prizes his own wit and prudence, and would take it for a disgrace to be thought adventurous. One person is assiduous and indefatigable in advancing himself to the character of a man of business. Another, on the contrary, thinks this impertinent; values not fame or a character in the world, and by his goodwill would always be in a debauch, and never live out of the stews or taverns, where he enjoys, as he thinks, his highest good. One values wealth as a means only to indulge his palate and to eat finely. Another loathes this, and affects popularity and a name. One admires music and paintings, cabinet curiosities and in-door ornaments. Another admires gardens, architecture, and the pomp of buildings. Another, who has no gusto of either sort, believes all those they call virtuosi to be half-distracted. One looks upon all expense to be madness, and thinks only wealth itself to be good. One games; another dresses and studies an equipage; another is full of heraldry, points of honour, a family, and a blood. One recommends gallantry and intrigue; another, ordinary good-fellowship; another, buffoonery, satire, and the common wit; another, sports and the country; another, a court; another, travelling and the sight of foreign parts; another, poetry and the fashionable learning. . . . All these go different ways. All censure one another, and are despicable in one another's eyes. By fits too they are as despicable in their own, and as often out of conceit with themselves as their humour changes and their passion turns from one thing to another. . . . What is it, then, I should be concerned for? Whose censure do I fear, or by whom, after all, shall I be guided?

If I ask, "Are riches good when only heaped up and unemployed?" one answers, "They are." The rest deny. "How is it, then, they are to be employed in order to be good?" All disagree. All tell me different things. "Since, therefore, riches are not of themselves good (as most of you declare), and since there is no agreement among you which way they become good, why may not I hold it for my opinion that they are neither good in themselves nor directly any cause or means of good?"

If there be those who wholly despise fame, and if among those who covet it he who desires it for one thing despises it for another, he who seeks it with some men despises it with others, why may not I say "that neither do I know how any fame can be called a good"?

If of those who covet pleasure, they who admire it in one kind are superior to it in another, why may not I say "that neither do I know which of these pleasures, or how pleasure itself, can be called good"?

If among those who covet life ever so earnestly, that life which to one is eligible and amiable is to another despicable and vile, why may not I say "that neither do I know how life itself can of itself be thought a good"?

In the meantime this I know certainly, "that the necessary consequence of esteeming these things highly is to be a slave, and consequently miserable." But perhaps, Philocles, you are not yet enough acquainted with this odd kind of reasoning?

More, said I, than I believe you can easily imagine. I perceived the goodly lady, your celebrated beauty, was about to appear anew, and I easily knew again that fair face of liberty which I had seen but once in the picture[1] you drew yesterday of that moral dame. I can assure you I think of her as highly as possible, and find that without her help to raise one above these seemingly essential goods, and make one more easy and indifferent towards life and towards a fortune, 'twill be the hardest thing in the world to enjoy either. Solicitude, cares, and anxiety will be multiplied; and in this unhappy dependency 'tis necessary to make court and be not a little servile. To flatter the great, to bear insults, to stoop and fawn and abjectly resign one's sense and manhood—all this must courageously be endured, and carried off with as free an air and good countenance as possible by one who studies greatness of this sort, who knows the general way of courts, and how to fix unsteady fortune. I need not mention the envyings, the mistrusts, and jealousies——

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[1] *Moralists,* part ii. § 2; and *Misc.* iv. ch. i.; v. ch. iii.

No, truly, said he (interrupting me), neither need you. But finding you so sensible, as I do, of this unhappy state, and of its inward sores (whatever may be its outward looks), how is it possible but you must find the happiness of that other contrary state? Can you not call to mind what we resolved concerning Nature? Can anything be more desirable than to follow her? Or is it not by this freedom from our passions and low interests that we are reconciled to the goodly order of the universe, that we harmonise with Nature, and live in friendship both with God and man?

Let us compare, continued he, the advantages of each state, and set their goods one against another. On one side, those which we found were uncertainly so, and depended both on fortune, age, circumstances, and humour; on the other side, those which, being certain themselves, are founded on the contempt of those others so uncertain. Is manly liberty, generosity, magnanimity, not a good? May we not esteem as happiness that self-enjoyment which arises from a consistency of life and manners, a harmony of affections, a freedom from the reproach of shame or guilt, and a consciousness of worth and merit with all mankind, our society, country, and friends—all which is founded in virtue only? A mind subordinate to reason, a temper humanised and fitted to all natural affections, an exercise of friendship uninterrupted, a thorough candour, benignity, and good nature, with constant security, tranquillity, equanimity (if I may use such philosophical terms), are not these ever and at all seasons good? Is it of these one can at any time nauseate and grow weary? Are there any particular ages, seasons, places, circumstances, which must accompany these to make them agreeable? Are these variable and inconstant? Do these, by being ardently beloved or sought, occasion any disturbance or misery? Can these be at any time overvalued, or, to say more yet, can these be ever taken from us, or can we ever be hindered in the enjoyment of them unless by ourselves? How can we better praise the goodness of Providence than in this, "That it has placed our happiness and good in things we can bestow upon ourselves"?

If this be so, said I, I see no reason we have to accuse Providence on any account. But men, I fear, will hardly be brought to this good temper while their fancy is so strong as it naturally is towards those other movable goods. And, in short, if we may depend on what is said commonly, "All good is merely as we fancy it. 'Tis conceit which makes it. All is opinion and fancy only."

Wherefore, then, said he, do we act at any time? Why choose, or why prefer one thing to another? You will tell me, I suppose, 'tis because we fancy it, or fancy good in it. Are we therefore to follow every present fancy, opinion, or imagination of good? If so, then we must follow that at one time which we decline at another, approve at one time what we disapprove at another, and be at perpetual variance with ourselves. But if we are not to follow all fancy or opinion alike, if it be allowed "that of fancies, some are true, some false," then we are to examine every fancy; and there is some rule or other by which to judge and determine. 'Twas the fancy of one man to set fire to a beautiful temple, in order to obtain immortal memory or fame. 'Twas the fancy of another man to conquer the world for the same reason, or what was very like it. If this were really the man's good, why do we wonder at him? If the fancy were wrong, say plainly in what it was so, or why the subject was not good to him as he fancied? Either, therefore, "that is every man's good which he fancies, and because he fancies it and is not content without it," or otherwise, "there is that in which the nature of man is satisfied, and which alone must be his good." If that in which the nature of man is satisfied and can rest contented be alone his good, then he is a fool who follows that with earnestness as his good which a man can be without, and yet be satisfied and contented. In the same manner is he a fool who flies that earnestly as his ill which a man may endure and yet be easy and contented. Now a man may possibly not have burnt a temple (as Erostratus) and yet may be contented. Or though he may not have conquered the world (as Alexander) yet he may be easy and contented, as he may still without any of those advantages of power, riches, or renown, if his fancy hinders not. In short, we shall find "that without any one of those which are commonly called goods, a man may be contented." As, on the contrary, "he may possess them all, and still be discontented and not a jot the happier." If so, it follows "that happiness is from within, not from without." A good fancy is the main. And thus you see I agree with you "that opinion is all in all."[1] But what is this, Philocles, which has seized you? You seem of a sudden grown deeply thoughtful.

To tell you truth, said I, I was considering what would become of me if after all I should, by your means, turn philosopher. The change, truly, would be somewhat extraordinary, replied Theocles. But be not concerned. The danger is not so great. And experience shows us every day that for talking or writing philosophy, people are not at all the nearer being philosophers.

But, said I, the very name is a kind of reproach. The word idiot stood formerly as the opposite to philosopher, but nowadays it means nothing more commonly than the philosopher himself.

Yet, in effect, replied he, what else is it we all do in general than philosophise? If philosophy be, as we take it, the study of happiness, must not every one, in some manner or other, either skilfully or unskilfully philosophise? Is not every deliberation concerning our main interest, every correction of our taste, every choice and preference in life to be reckoned of this kind? For "if happiness be not allowed to be from self and from within, then either is it from outward things alone, or from self and outward things together." If from outward things alone, show it us in fact "that all men are happy in proportion to these, and that no one who possesses them is ever miserable by his own fault." But this, it seems, hardly any one will pretend to evince. All own the contrary. Therefore "if happiness be partly from self, partly from outward things, then each must be considered, and a certain value set on the concerns of an inward kind, and which depend on self alone." If so, and that I consider "how, and in what these are to be preferred; when and on what occasion they are in season or out of season; when properly to take place, when to yield," what's this after all but to philosophise? Yet even this, still, is enough to put one out of the ordinary way of thinking, and give one an unhappy turn for business and the world. Right! For this also is to be considered and well weighed. And therefore this still is philosophy, "to inquire where, and in what respect one may be most a loser; which are the greatest gains, the most profitable exchanges," since everything in this world goes by exchange. Nothing is had for nothing. Favour requires courtship; interest is made by solicitation; honours are acquired with hazard; riches with pains; learning and accomplishments by study and application. Security, rest, indolence are to be had at other prices. They may be thought, perhaps, to come easy. For "what hardship is there? Where is the harm? 'Tis only to abate of fame and fortune. 'Tis only to waive the point of honour and share somewhat less of interest. If this be easy, all is well. Some patience, you see, is necessary in the case. Privacy must be endured; even obscurity and contempt. Such are the conditions. And thus everything has its condition. Power and preferments are to be had at one rate, pleasures at another, liberty and honesty at another. A good mind must be paid for as other things.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part iii. § 2; *Misc.* iv. ch. i.

But we had best beware lest, perhaps, we pay too dear for it. Let us be assured we have a good bargain. Come on then. . . . Let us account. . . . "What is a mind worth? What allowance may one handsomely make for it? or what may one well afford it for?" . . . If I part with it, or abate of it, 'tis not for nothing. Some value I must needs set upon my liberty, some upon my inward character. Something there is in what we call worth, something in sincerity and a sound heart. Orderly affections, generous thoughts, and a commanding reason are fair possessions, not slightly to be given up. I am to consider first "what may be their equivalent? Whether I shall find my account in letting these inward concerns run as they please, or whether I shall not be better secured against fortune by adjusting matters at home, rather than by making interest abroad, and acquiring first one great friend, then another, to add still more and more to my estate or quality?" For where am I to take up? Begin and set the bounds. Let me hear positively "how far I am to go, and why no further?" What is a moderate fortune, a competency, and those other degrees commonly talked of? Where is my anger to stop? or how high may I suffer it to rise? How far may I engage in love? How far give way to ambition? How far to other appetites? Or am I to let all loose? Are the passions to take their swing, and no application to be given to them, but all to the outward things they aim at? Or if any application be requisite, say plainly "how much to one, and how much to the other?" How far are the appetites to be minded, and how far outward things? Give us the measure and rule. See whether this be not to philosophise? and whether willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly, every one does not as much? "Where, then, is the difference? Which manner is the best?" Here lies the question. This is what I would have you weigh and examine. "But the examination (say you) is troublesome, and I had better be without it." Who tells you thus? Your reason, you say, whose force, of necessity, you must yield to." Tell me, therefore, have you fitly cultivated that reason of yours, polished it, bestowed the necessary pains on it, and exercised it on this subject? Or is it like to determine full as well when unexercised as when thoroughly exercised or ever so expert? Consider, pray, in mathematics whose is the better reason of the two, and fitter to be relied on? The practiser's, or his who is unpractised? Whose in the way of war, of policy, or civil affairs? Whose in merchandise, law, physic? And in morality and life, I ask still, whose? May he not, perhaps, be allowed the best judge of living who studies life and endeavours to form it by some rule? Or is he indeed to be esteemed most knowing in the matter who slightly examines it, and who accidentally and unknowingly philosophises?

Thus, Philocles, said he, concluding his discourse, thus is philosophy established. For every one, of necessity, must reason concerning his own happiness "what his good is and what his ill." The question is only "who reasons best?" For even he who rejects this reasoning or deliberating part does it from a certain reason, and from a persuasion "that this is best."

By this time we found ourselves insensibly got home. Our philosophy ended, and we returned to the common affairs of life.

TREATISE VI

MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS

On the preceding Treatises, etc.

> Scilicet uni aequus Virtuti atque ejus amicis.
>
> Hor. *Sat.* I. ii.

Printed first in the year MDCCXI.[1]

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[1] [In many of the later editions this date is wrongly given as 1714. The *Miscellaneous Reflections* actually appeared in 1711, making the third volume of the *Characteristics*.]

MISCELLANY I

CHAPTER I

Of the nature, rise, and establishment of Miscellanies—The subject of these which follow—Intention of the writer.

Peace be with the soul of that charitable and courteous author who, for the common benefit of his fellow-authors, introduced the ingenious way of miscellaneous writing! It must be owned that since this happy method was established, the harvest of wit has been more plentiful, and the labourers more in number than heretofore. 'Tis well known to the able practitioners in the writing art "that as easy as it is to conceive wit, 'tis the hardest thing imaginable to be delivered of it, upon certain terms." Nothing could be more severe or rigid than the conditions formerly prescribed to writers, when criticism took place, and regularity and order were thought essential in a treatise. The notion of a genuine work, a legitimate and just piece, has certainly been the occasion of great timidity and backwardness among the adventurers in wit; and the imposition of such strict laws and rules of composition has sat heavy on the free spirits and forward geniuses of mankind. 'Twas a yoke, it seems, which our forefathers bore, but which, for our parts, we have generously thrown off. In effect, the invidious distinctions of bastardy and legitimacy being at length removed, the natural and lawful issue of the brain comes with like advantage into the world, and wit (mere wit) is well received without examination of the kind or censure of the form.

This the miscellaneous manner of writing, it must be owned, has happily effected. It has rendered almost every soil productive. It has disclosed those various seeds of wit which lay suppressed in many a bosom, and has reared numberless conceits and curious fancies which the natural rudeness and asperity of their native soil would have withheld, or at least not have permitted to rise above the ground. From every field, from every hedge or hillock, we now gather as delicious fruits and fragrant flowers as of old from the richest and best cultivated gardens. Miserable were those ancient planters who, understanding not how to conform themselves to the rude taste of unpolished mankind, made it so difficult a task to serve the world with intellectual entertainments, and furnish out the repasts of literature and science.

There was certainly a time when the name of author stood for something considerable in the world. To succeed happily in such a labour as that of writing a treatise or a poem was taken as a sure mark of understanding and good sense. The task was painful, but, it seems, 'twas honourable. How the case happened in process of time to be so much reversed is hard to say. The primitive authors perhaps being few in number and highly respected for their art, fell under the weight of envy. Being sensible of their misfortune in this respect, and being excited, as 'tis probable, by the example of some popular genius, they quitted their regular schemes and accurate forms of workmanship in favour of those wits who could not possibly be received as authors upon such difficult terms. 'Twas necessary, it seems, that the bottom of wit should be enlarged. 'Twas advisable that more hands should be taken into the work, and nothing could better serve this popular purpose than the way of miscellany or common essay, in which the most confused head, if fraught with a little invention and provided with common-place book learning, might exert itself to as much advantage as the most orderly and well-settled judgment.

To explain the better how this revolution in letters has been effected, it may not perhaps be indecent should we offer to compare our writing artists to the manufacturers in stuff or silk. For among these 'tis esteemed a principal piece of skill to frame a pattern or plan of workmanship in which the several colours are agreebly disposed, with such proportionable adjustment of the various figures and devices as may, in the whole, create a kind of harmony to the eye. According to this method each piece must be in reality an original. For to copy what has gone before can be of no use. The fraud would easily be perceived. On the other side, to work originally, and in a manner create each time anew, must be a matter of pressing weight, and fitted to the strength and capacity of none besides the choicest workmen.

A manner therefore is invented to confound this simplicity and conformity of design; patchwork is substituted; cuttings and shreds of learning, with various fragments and points of wit, are drawn together and tacked in any fantastic form. If they chance to cast a lustre and spread a sort of sprightly glare, the miscellany is approved and the complex form and texture of the work admired. The eye, which before was to be won by regularity, and had kept true to measure and strict proportion, is by this means pleasingly drawn aside to commit a kind of debauch and amuse itself in gaudy colours and disfigured shapes of things. Custom in the meanwhile has not only tolerated this licentiousness, but rendered it even commendable, and brought it into the highest repute. The wild and whimsical, under the name of the odd and pretty, succeed in the room of the graceful and the beautiful. Justness and accuracy of thought are set aside as too constraining and of too painful an aspect to be endured in the agreeable and more easy commerce of gallantry and modern wit.

Now since it has been thought convenient in these latter ages to distinguish the provinces of wit and wisdom and set apart the agreeable from the useful, 'tis evident there could be nothing devised more suitable to the distinct and separate interest of the former of these provinces than this complex manner of performance which we call miscellany. For whatever is capricious and odd is sure to create diversion to those who look no further. And where there is nothing like nature, there is no room for the troublesome part of thought or contemplation. 'Tis the perfection of certain grotesque painters to keep as far from nature as possible. To find a likeness in their works is to find the greatest fault imaginable. A natural connection is a slur. A coherence, a design, a meaning is against their purpose, and destroys the very spirit and genius of their workmanship.

I remember formerly when I was a spectator in the French theatre I found it the custom at the end of every grave and solemn tragedy to introduce a comic farce or miscellany which they called *the little piece.* We have indeed a method still more extraordinary upon our own stage, for we think it agreeable and just to mix the little piece or farce with the main plot or fable through every act. This perhaps may be the rather chosen, because our tragedy is so much deeper and bloodier than that of the French, and therefore needs more immediate refreshment from the elegant way of drollery and burlesque wit, which, being thus closely interwoven with its opposite, makes that most accomplished kind of theatrical miscellany, called by our poets a tragi-comedy.

I could go further perhaps, and demonstrate from the writings of many of our grave divines, the speeches of our senators, and other principal models of our national erudition "that the miscellaneous manner is at present in the highest esteem." But since my chief intention in the following sheets is to descant cursorily upon some late pieces of a British author, I will presume that what I have said already on this head is sufficient, and that it will not be judged improper or absurd in me, as I proceed, to take advantage of this miscellaneous taste which now evidently prevails. According to this method, whilst I serve as critic or interpreter to this new writer, I may the better correct his flegm, and give him more of the fashionable air and manner of the world, especially in what relates to the subject and manner of his two last pieces, which are contained in his second volume. For these being of the more regular and formal kind may easily be oppressive to the airy reader, and may therefore with the same assurance as tragedy claim the necessary relief of the little piece or farce above mentioned.

Nor ought the title of a miscellaneous writer to be denied me on the account that I have grounded my miscellanies upon a certain set of treatises already published. Grounds and foundations are of no moment in a kind of work which, according to modern establishment, has properly neither top nor bottom, beginning nor end. Besides that, I shall no way confine myself to the precise contents of these treatises, but, like my fellow-miscellanarians, shall take occasion to vary often from my proposed subject, and make what deviations or excursions I shall think fit, as I proceed in my random essays.

CHAPTER II

Of controversial writings: answers: replies—Polemic divinity, or the writing Church militant—Philosophers, and bear garden—Authors paired and matched—The matchmakers—Football—A dialogue between our author and his bookseller.

Among the many improvements daily made in the art of writing, there is none perhaps which can be said to have attained a greater height than that of controversy or the method of answer and refutation. 'Tis true indeed, that anciently the wits of men were for the most part taken up in other employment.

If authors writ ill they were despised, if well they were by some party or other espoused. For parties there would necessarily be, and sects of every kind in learning and philosophy. Every one sided with whom he liked, and having the liberty of hearing each side speak for itself, stood in no need of express warning pieces against pretended sophistry or dangerous reasoning. Particular answers to single treatises were thought to be of little use. And it was esteemed no compliment to a reader to help him so carefully in the judgment of every piece which came abroad. Whatever sects there were in those days, the zeal of party-causes ran not so high as to give the reader a taste of those personal reproaches which might pass in a debate between the different party-men.

Thus matters stood of old, when as yet the method of writing controversy was not raised into an art, nor the feuds of contending authors become the chief amusement of the learned world. But we have at present so high a relish of this kind, that the writings of the learned are never truly gustful till they are come to what we may properly enough call their due ripeness, and have begot a fray. When the answer and reply is once formed our curiosity is excited; we begin then, for the first time, to whet our attention and apply our ear.

For example, let a zealous divine and flaming champion of our faith, when inclined to show himself in print, make choice of some tremendous mystery of religion, opposed heretofore by some damnable heresiarch, whom having vehemently refuted, he turns himself towards the orthodox opinion, and supports the true belief, with the highest eloquence and profoundest erudition; he shall, notwithstanding this, remain perhaps in deep obscurity, to the great affliction of his bookseller and the regret of all who bear a just veneration for Church history and the ancient purity of the Christian faith. But let it so happen that in this prosecution of his deceased adversary our doctor raises up some living antagonist, who, on the same foot of orthodoxy with himself, pretends to arraign his expositions, and refute the refuter upon every article he has advanced; from this moment the writing gathers life, the public listens, the bookseller takes heart, and when issue is well joined, the repartees grown smart, and the contention vigorous between the learned parties, a ring is made and readers gather in abundance. Every one takes party, and encourages his own side. "This shall be my champion! This man for my money! Well hit, on our side! Again, a good stroke! There he was even with him! Have at him the next bout!" Excellent sport! And when the combatants are for a while drawn off and each retired with his own companions, what praises and congratulations! what applauses of the supposed victor! And how honourably is he saluted by his favourers, and complimented even to the disturbance of his modesty! "Nay, but gentlemen! Good gentlemen! do you really think thus? Are you sincere with me? Have I treated my adversary as he deserves? Never was man so mauled. Why, you have killed him downright. O sirs! you flatter me. He can never rise more. Think ye so indeed? Or if he should, 'twould be a pleasure to see how you would handle him."

These are the triumphs. This is what sets sharp; this gives the author his edge and excites the reader's attention, when the trumpets are thus sounded to the crowd, and a kind of amphitheatrical entertainment exhibited to the multitude by these gladiatorian penmen.

The author of the preceding treatises being by profession a nice inspector into the ridicule of things, must in all probability have raised to himself some such views as those which hindered him from engaging in the way of controversy. For when, by accident, the first of these treatises[1] (a private letter, and in the writer's esteem little worthy of the public's notice) came to be read abroad in copies, and afterwards in print, the smartest answers which came out against it could not, it seems, move our author to form any reply. All he was heard to say in

[1] Viz. the *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm.*

return was, "that he thought whoever had taken upon him to publish a book in answer to that casual piece, had certainly made either a very high compliment to the author, or a very ill one to the public."

It must be owned that when a writer of any kind is so considerable as to deserve the labour and pains of some shrewd heads to refute him in public, he may, in the quality of an author, be justly congratulated on that occasion. 'Tis supposed necessarily that he must have written with some kind of ability or wit. But if his original performance be in truth no better than ordinary, his answerer's task must certainly be very mean. He must be very indifferently employed who would take upon him to answer nonsense in form, ridicule what is of itself a jest, and put it upon the world to read a second book for the sake of the impertinencies of a former.

Taking it, however, for granted "that a sorry treatise may be the foundation of a considerable answer," a reply still must certainly be ridiculous whichever way we take it. For either the author, in his original piece, has been truly refuted or not. If refuted, why does he defend? If not refuted, why trouble himself? What has the public to do with his private quarrels or his adversary's impertinence? Or supposing the world, out of curiosity, may delight to see a pedant exposed by a man of better wit, and a controversy thus unequally carried on between two such opposite parties, how long is this diversion likely to hold good? And what will become of these polemic writings a few years hence? What is already become of those mighty controversies with which some of the most eminent authors amused the world within the memory of the youngest scholar? An original work or two may perhaps remain; but for the subsequent defences, the answers, rejoinders, and replications, they have been long since paying their attendance to the pastry-cooks. Mankind perhaps were heated at that time when first those matters were debated; but they are now cool again. They laughed; they carried on the humour; they blew the coals; they teased, and set on maliciously, and to create themselves diversion. But the jest is now over. No one so much as inquires where the wit was, or where possibly the sting should lie of those notable reflections and satirical hints which were once found so pungent, and gave the readers such high delight. Notable philosophers and divines, who can be contented to make sport, and write in learned Billinsgate to divert the coffee-house, and entertain the assemblies at booksellers' shops or the more airy stalls of inferior book retailers!

It must be allowed that in this respect controversial writing is not so wholly unprofitable, and that for book-merchants, of whatever kind or degree, they undoubtedly receive no small advantage from a right improvement of a learned scuffle. Nothing revives them more, or makes a quicker trade, than a pair of substantial divines or grave philosophers, well matched and soundly backed, till by long worrying one another they are grown out of breath and have almost lost their force of biting. "So have I known a crafty glazier, in time of frost, procure a footfall to draw into the street the emulous chiefs of the robust youth. The tumid bladder bounds at every kick, bursts the withstanding casements, the chassies,[1] lanterns, and all the brittle vitreous ware. The noise of blows and outcries fills the whole neighbourhood, and ruins of glass cover the stony pavements, till the bloated battering engine, subdued by force of foot and fist, and yielding up its breath at many a fatal cranny, becomes lank and harmless, sinks in its flight, and can no longer uphold the spirit of the contending parties."

This our author supposes to have been the occasion of his being so often and zealously complimented by his amanuensis (for so he calls his bookseller or printer[2]) on the fame of his first piece. The obliging craftsman has at times presented him with many a handsome book, set off with titles of remarks, reflections, and the like, which, as he assured him, were answers to his small treatise. "Here, sir, says he, you have a considerable hand has undertaken you!—This, sir, is a reverend; this a right reverend; this a noted author. Will you not reply, sir? O' my word, sir, the world is in expectation. Pity they should be disappointed! A dozen sheets, sir, would be sufficient! You might dispatch it presently. Think you so? I have my paper ready—and a good letter. Take my word for it. You shall see, sir! Enough. But hark ye (Mr. A-a-a-a), my worthy engineer and manager of the war of letters, ere you prepare your artillery or engage me in acts of hostility, let me hear, I entreat you, whether or no my adversary be taken notice of. Wait for his second edition, and if by next year, or a year or two after, it be known in good company that there is such a book in being, I shall then perhaps think it time to consider of a reply."

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[1] [*I.e.* window-frames. Fr. *chasse.*]

[2] Vol. i. p. 198.

CHAPTER III

Of the letter concerning Enthusiasm—Foreign critics—Of letters in general, and of the epistolary style—Addresses to great men—Authors and horsemanship—The modern amble—Further explanation of the miscellaneous manner.

As resolute as our author may have shown himself in refusing to take notice of the smart writings published against him by certain zealots of his own country, he could not, it seems, but out of curiosity observe what the foreign and more impartial critics might object to his small treatise, which he was surprised to hear had been translated into foreign languages soon after it had been published here at home. The first censure of this kind which came to our author's sight was that of the Paris *Journal des Savans*.[1] Considering how little favourable the author of the letter had shown himself towards the Romish Church and policy of France, it must be owned those journalists have treated him with sufficient candour, though they failed not to take what advantages they well could against the writing, and particularly arraigned it for the want of order and method.[1]

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[1] Du 25 mars 1709.

The Protestant writers, such as live in a free country, and can deliver their sentiments without constraint, have certainly[2] done our author more honour than he ever presumed to think he could deserve. His translator, indeed, who had done him the previous honour of introducing him to the acquaintance of the foreign world, represents particularly, by the turn given to the latter end of the letter, that the writer of it was, as to his condition and rank, little better than an inferior dependent on the noble Lord to whom he had addressed himself. And in reality the original has so much of that air that I wonder not, if what the author left ambiguous, the translator has determined to the side of clientship and dependency.

But whatever may have been the circumstance or character of our author himself, that of his great friend ought in justice to have been considered by those former critics above mentioned. So much, at least, should have been taken notice of, that there was a real great man characterised and suitable measures of address and style preserved. But they who would neither observe this nor apprehend the letter itself to be real, were insufficient critics, and unqualified to judge of the turn or humour of a piece which they had never considered in a proper light.

'Tis become indeed so common a practice among authors to feign a correspondency, and give the title of a private letter to a piece addressed solely to the public, that it would not be strange to see other journalists and critics, as well as the gentlemen of Paris, pass over such particularities, as things of form.

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[1] "Ses pensées ne semblent occuper dans son ouvrage que la place que le hazard leur a donnée." *Ib.* p. 181.

[2] (1) *Bibliothèque Choisie,* année 1709, tome xix. p. 427. (2) *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans,* mois d'octobre, novembre, et décembre 1708, p. 514. (3) *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres,* mois de mars 1710.

This prejudice, however, could not misguide a chief critic of the Protestant side, when mentioning this letter concerning Enthusiasm,[1] he speaks of it as a real letter (such as in truth it was), not a precise and formal treatise designed for public view.[2]

It will be owned surely, by those who have learnt to judge of elegancy and wit by the help merely of modern languages, that we could have little relish of the best letters of a Balsac or Voiture, were we wholly ignorant of the characters of the principal persons to whom those letters were actually written. But much less could we find pleasure in this reading, should we take it into our heads that both the personages and correspondency itself were merely fictitious. Let the best of Tully's Epistles be read in such a narrow view as this, and they will certainly prove very insipid. If a real Brutus, a real Atticus be not supposed, there will be no real Cicero. The elegant writer will disappear, as will the vast labour and art with which this eloquent Roman writ those letters to his illustrious friends. There was no kind of composition in which this great author prided or pleased himself more than in this, where he endeavoured to throw off the mien of the philosopher and orator, whilst in effect he employed both his rhetoric and philosophy with the greatest force. They who can read an epistle or satire of Horace in somewhat better than a mere scholastic relish, will comprehend that the concealment of order and method in this manner of writing makes the chief beauty of the work. They will own that unless a reader be in some measure apprised of the characters of an Augustus, a Mæcenas, a Florus, or a Trebatius, there will be little relish in those satires or epistles addressed in particular to the courtiers, ministers, and great men of the times. Even the satiric or miscellaneous manner of the polite ancients, required as much order as the most regular pieces. But the art was to destroy every such token or appearance, give an extemporary air to what was writ, and make the effect of art be felt without discovering the artifice. There needs no further explanation on this head. Our author himself has said enough in his *Advice to an Author*,[1] particularly where he treats of the simple style, in contradistinction to the learned, the formal, or methodic.

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[1] "Ceux qui l'ont lue ont pu voir en général, que l'auteur ne s'y est pas proposé un certain plan pour traiter sa matière méthodiquement; parceque c'est une lettre, et non un traité." *Bibliothèque Choisie,* tome xix. p. 328.

[2] If in this joint edition, with other works, the letter be made to pass under that general name of treatise, 'tis the bookseller must account for it. For the author's part, he considers it as no other than what it originally was.

'Tis a different case indeed when the title of Epistle is improperly given to such works as were never writ in any other view than that of being made public, or to serve as exercises or specimens of the wit of their composer. Such were those infinite numbers of Greek and Latin Epistles, writ by the ancient sophists, grammarians, or rhetoricians, where we find the real character of the Epistle, the genuine style and manners of the corresponding parties sometimes imitated, but at other times not so much as aimed at, nor any measures of historical truth preserved. Such perhaps we may esteem even the letters of a Seneca[2] to his friend Lucilius. Or supposing that philosophical courtier had really such a correspondency, and, at several times, had sent so many fair Epistles, honestly signed and sealed, to his country friend at a distance; it appears, however, by the Epistles themselves, in their proper order (if they may be said to have any), that after a few attempts at the beginning, the author by degrees loses sight of his correspondent, and takes the world in general for his reader or disciple. He falls into the random way of miscellaneous writing, says everywhere great

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[1] Vol. i. pp. 167-169.

[2] 'Tis not the person, character, or genius, but the style and manner of this great man which we presume to censure. We acknowledge his noble sentiments and worthy actions. We own the patriot and good minister; but we reject the writer. He was the first of any note or worth who gave credit to that false style and manner here spoken of. He might on this account be called in reality the corrupter of Roman eloquence. This indeed could not but naturally, and of itself, become relax and dissolute, after such a relaxation and dissolution of manners, consequent to the change of Government, and to the horrid luxury and effeminacy of the Roman court even before the time of a Claudius or a Nero. There was no more possibility of making a stand for language than for liberty. As the world now stood, the highest glory which could be attained by mortal man was to be mitigator or moderator of that universal tyranny already established. To this I must add that in every city, principality, or smaller nation, where single will prevails, and court-power, instead of laws or constitutions,

guides the State, 'tis of the highest difficulty for the best minister to procure a just or even a tolerable administration. Where such a minister is found, who can but moderately influence the petty tyranny, he deserves considerable applause and honour. But in the case we have mentioned, where a universal monarchy was actually established, and the interest of a whole world concerned, he surely must have been esteemed a guardian-angel who, as a Prime Minister, could for several years turn the very worst of courts, and worst conditioned of all princes, to the fatherly care and just government of mankind. Such a minister was Seneca under an Agrippina and a Nero. And such he was acknowledged by the ancient and never-sparing satirists, who could not forbear to celebrate withal his generosity and friendship in a private life :—

Nemo petit modicis quae mittebantur amicis
A Seneca; quae Piso bonus, quae Cotta solebat
Largiri : namque et titulis, et fascibus olim
Major habebatur donandi gloria.

["No one asks for what used to be sent to his clients by Seneca, or what good-natured Piso or Cotta used to give; for the glory of liberality was once reckoned greater than inscriptions recording your high office."—Juvenal, v. 108-111.]

Quis tam
Perditus, ut dubitet Senecam praeferre Neroni?

["Who is so abandoned as to hesitate to set Seneca above Nero?"—Juvenal, viii. 212.]

This remark is what I have been tempted to make by the way on the character of this Roman author, more mistaken (if I am not very much so myself) than any other so generally studied. As for the philosophic character or function imputed to him, 'twas foreign, and no way proper or peculiar to one who never assumed so much as that of sophist or pensionary teacher of philosophy. He was far wide of any such order or profession.

and noble things, in and out of the way, accidentally as words led him (for with these he plays perpetually), with infinite wit, but with little or no coherence, without a shape or body to his work, without a real beginning,[1] a middle, or an end. Of a hundred and twenty-four Epistles, you may, if you please, make five hundred, or half a score. A great one, for instance, you may divide into five or six. A little one you may tack to another, and that to another, and so on. The unity of the writing will be the same; the life and spirit full as well preserved. 'Tis not only whole letters or pages you may change and manage thus at pleasure; every period, every sentence almost, is independent, and may be taken asunder, transposed, postponed, anticipated, or set in any new order, as you fancy.

This is the manner of writing so much admired and imitated in our age, that we have scarce the idea of any other model. We know little, indeed, of the difference between one model or character of writing and another. All runs to the same tune, and beats exactly one and the same measure. Nothing, one would think, could be more tedious than this uniform pace. The common amble or *canterbury* is not, I am persuaded, more tiresome to a good rider than this see-saw of essay writers is to an able reader. The just composer of a legitimate piece is like an able traveller, who exactly measures his journey, considers

There is great difference between a courtier who takes a fancy for philosophy and a philosopher who should take a fancy for a court. Now Seneca was born a courtier, being son of a court rhetor; himself bred in the same manner, and taken into favour for his wit and genius, his admired style and eloquence, not for his learning in the books of philosophy and the ancients. For this indeed was not very profound in him. In short, he was a man of wonderful wit, fluency of thought and language, an able minister, and honest courtier. And what has been delivered down to his prejudice, is by the common enemy of all the free and generous Romans, that apish shallow historian and court flatterer, Dion Cassius, of a low age, when barbarism (as may be easily seen in his own work) came on apace, and the very traces and features of virtue, science, and knowledge were wearing out of the world.

[1] *Infra, Misc.* v. ch. i., in the notes; and *Wit and Humour,* part. iv. § 3.

his ground, premeditates his stages and intervals of relaxation and intention to the very conclusion of his undertaking, that he happily arrives where he first proposed when he set out. He is not presently upon the spur, or in his full career, but walks his steed leisurely out of his stable, settles himself in his stirrups, and, when fair road and season offer, puts on perhaps to a round trot, thence into a gallop, and after a while takes up. As down or meadow or shady lane present themselves, he accordingly suits his pace, favours his palfrey; and is sure not to bring him puffing, and in a heat, into his last inn. But the post-way is become highly fashionable with modern authors. The very same stroke sets you out and brings you in. Nothing stays or interrupts. Hill or valley, rough or smooth, thick or thin; no difference, no variation. When an author sits down to write he knows no other business he has than to be witty, and take care that his periods be well turned, or, as they commonly say, run smooth. In this manner he doubts not to gain the character of bright. When he has writ as many pages as he likes, or as his run of fancy would permit, he then perhaps considers what name he had best give to his new writing; whether he should call it letter, essay, miscellany, or aught else. The bookseller perhaps is to determine this at last, when all besides the preface, epistle dedicatory, and title-page is dispatched.

. . . Incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum.
. . . Deus inde ego![1]

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[1] ["Hesitating whether he should make a bench or a Priapus. . . . So I am a God!" Horace, *Sat.* I viii. 2, 3.]

MISCELLANY II

CHAPTER I

Review of Enthusiasm—Its defence, praise—Use in business as well as pleasure—Operation by fear. Love—Modifications of enthusiasm; magnanimity; heroic virtue; honour; public zeal; religion superstition; persecution; martyrdom—Energy of the ecstatic devotion in the tender sex—Account of ancient priesthood—Religious war—Reference to a succeeding chapter.

Whether, in fact, there be any real enchantment, any influence of stars, any power of demons or of foreign natures over our own minds, is thought questionable by many. Some there are who assert the negative, and endeavour to solve the appearances of this kind by the natural operation of our passions and the common course of outward things. For my own part, I cannot but at this present apprehend a kind of enchantment or magic in that which we call enthusiasm; since I find that, having touched slightly on this subject, I cannot so easily part with it at pleasure.

After having made some cursory reflections on our author's letter,[1] I thought I might have sufficiently acquitted myself on this head, till passing to his next treatise I found myself still further engaged. I perceived plainly that I had as yet scarce entered into our author's humour, or felt anything of that passion which, as he informs us, is so easily communicable and naturally engaging. But what I had passed over in my first reflections I found naturally rising in me upon second thoughts. So that by experience I proved it true what our author says, "That we all of us know something of this principle." And now that I find I have in reality so much of it imparted to me, I may with better reason be pardoned if, after our author's example, I am led to write on such subjects as these with caution, at different *reprises;* and not singly, in one breath.

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[1] Viz. *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm,* above.

I have heard indeed that the very reading of treatises and accounts of melancholy has been apt to generate that passion in the over-diligent and attentive reader. And this, perhaps, may have been the reason why our author himself (as he seems to intimate towards the conclusion of his first letter) cared not in reality to grapple closely with his subject, or give us at once the precise definition of enthusiasm. This, however, we may, with our author, presume to infer from the coolest of all studies, even from criticism itself (of which we have been lately treating), "that there is a power in numbers, harmony, proportion, and beauty of every kind, which naturally captivates the heart, and raises the imagination to an opinion or conceit of something majestic and divine."

Whatever this subject may be in itself, we cannot help being transported with the thought of it. It inspires us with something more than ordinary, and raises us above ourselves. Without this imagination or conceit the world would be but a dull circumstance, and life a sorry pastime. Scarce could we be said to live. The animal functions might in their course be carried on; but nothing further sought for or regarded. The gallant sentiments, the elegant fancies, the *belles passions* which have, all of them, this beauty in view, would be set aside, and leave us probably no other employment than that of satisfying our coarsest appetites at the cheapest rate, in order to the attainment of a supine state of indolence and inactivity.

Slender would be the enjoyments of the lover, the ambitious man, the warrior, or the virtuoso (as our author has elsewhere[1] intimated), if in the beauties which they admire and passionately pursue there were no reference or regard to any higher majesty or grandeur than what simply results from the particular objects of their pursuit. I know not, in reality, what we should do to find a seasoning to most of our pleasures in life, were it not for the taste or relish which is owing to this particular passion, and the conceit or imagination which supports it. Without this, we could not so much as admire a poem or a picture; a garden or a palace; a charming shape or a fair face. Love itself would appear the lowest thing in Nature when thus anticipated, and treated according to the anti-enthusiastic poet's method:—

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[1] *Moralists,* part iii. § 2.

> Et jacere humorem collectum in corpora quaeque.[1]

How heroism or magnanimity must stand in this hypothesis is easy to imagine. The Muses themselves must make a very indifferent figure in this philosophical draught. Even the prince of poets[2] would prove a most insipid writer if he were thus reduced. Nor could there, according to this scheme, be yet a place of honour left even for our Latin poet,[3] the great disciple of this un-polite philosophy, who dares with so little equity employ the Muses' art in favour of such a system. But in spite of his philosophy he everywhere gives way to admiration and rapturous views of Nature. He is transported with the several beauties of the world, even whilst he arraigns the order of it, and destroys the principle of beauty from whence in ancient languages the world[4] itself was named.

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[1] Lucretius, iv. 1065.

[2] *οὐδὲν μέρος Ὁμήρῳ ἄθεον, οὐδὲ δυνάστου ἄπορον, οὐδὲ ἀρχῆς ἔρημον, ἀλλὰ πάντα μεστὰ θείων ὀνομάτων καὶ θείων λόγων, καὶ θείας τέχνης.* ["No part in Homer is devoid of Gods, or bare of princes, or destitute of magistrates; but all is full of names and speeches and art of Gods."—Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.* 16.]

[3] Viz. Lucretius, as above, Treatise i. § 6, *end.*

[4] *κόσμος*, mundus. From whence that expostulation, *ἐν σοὶ μέν τις κόσμος ὑφίστασθαι δύναται, ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ ἀκοσμία;* ["Or can a certain order subsist

This is what our author advances: when in behalf of enthusiasm he quotes its formal enemies, and shows that they are as capable of it as its greatest confessors and assertors. So far is he from degrading enthusiasm or disclaiming it in himself, that he looks on this passion, simply considered, as the most natural, and its object as the justest in the world. Even virtue itself he takes to be no other than a noble enthusiasm justly directed and regulated by that high standard which he supposes in the nature of things.

He seems to assert[1] "that there are certain moral species or appearances so striking and of such force over our natures, that when they present themselves they bear down all contrary opinion or conceit, all opposite passion, sensation, or mere bodily affection." Of this kind he makes virtue itself to be the chief, since of all views or contemplations this, in his account, is the most naturally and strongly affecting. The exalted part of love is only borrowed hence. That of pure friendship is its immediate self. He who yields his life a sacrifice to his prince or country; the lover who for his paramour performs as much; the heroic, the amorous, the religious martyrs, who draw their views, whether visionary or real, from this pattern and exemplar of divinity; all these, according to our author's sentiment, are alike actuated by this passion, and prove themselves in effect so many different enthusiasts.

Nor is thorough honesty, in his hypothesis, any other than zeal or passion moving strongly upon the species or view of the decorum and sublime of actions. Others may pursue[2] different

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within thee, and none in the universe?"—Marcus Aurelius, iv. 27.] And that other allusion to the same word, *κόσμον δ' ἐτύμως τὸ σύμπαν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκοσμίαν ὀνομάσαις ἄν.* ["We might with correct etymology call the universe an order, but not a disorder."—Aristotle, *περὶ κόσμου*, c. 6.] Below, *Misc.* v. ch. i. in the notes.

[1] *Wit and Humour*, part iv. § 2; *Inquiry*, bk. ii. part ii. § 1.

[2] *Moralists*, part iii. § 3.

forms and fix their eye on different species (as all men do on one or other). The real honest man, however plain or simple he appears, has that highest species, honesty itself,[1] in view; and instead of outward forms or symmetries, is struck with that of inward character, the harmony and numbers of the heart and beauty of the affections, which form the manners and conduct of a truly social life.

'Tis indeed peculiar to the genius of that cool philosophy above described,[2] that as it denies the order or harmony of things in general, so by a just consequence and truth of reasoning it rejects the habit of admiring or being charmed with whatever is called beautiful in particular. According to the regimen prescribed by this philosophy, it must be acknowledged that the evils of love, ambition, vanity, luxury, with other disturbances derived from the florid, high, and elegant ideas of things, must in appearance be set in a fair way of being radically cured.

It need not be thought surprising that religion itself should in the account of these philosophers be reckoned among those vices and disturbances which it concerns us after this manner to extirpate. If the idea of majesty and beauty in other inferior subjects be in reality distracting, it must chiefly prove so in that principal subject, the basis and foundation of this conceit. Now if the subject itself be not in nature, neither the idea nor the passion grounded on it can be properly esteemed natural; and thus all admiration ceases, and enthusiasm is at an end. But if there be naturally such a passion, 'tis evident that religion itself is of the kind, and must be therefore natural to man.

We can admire nothing profoundly without a certain religious veneration. And because this borders so much on fear, and raises a certain tremor or horror of like appearance, 'tis easy to give that turn to the affection, and represent all enthusiasm and religious ecstasy as the product or mere effect of fear:

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[1] The honestum, pulchrum, *τὸ καλόν, πρέπον*. *Infra, Misc.* iii. ch. ii.

[2] *Supra*, p. 175; Treatise I. § 6; and Treatise II. part iii. § 3.

> Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.

But the original passion, as appears plainly, is of another kind, and in effect is so confessed by those who are the greatest opposers of religion, and who, as our author observes, have shown themselves sufficiently convinced, "that although these ideas of divinity and beauty were vain, they were yet in a manner innate, or such as men were really born to and could hardly by any means avoid."[1]

Now as all affections have their excess, and require judgment and discretion to moderate and govern them, so this high and noble affection, which raises man to action and is his guide in business as well as pleasure, requires a steady rein and strict hand over it. All moralists, worthy of any name, have recognised the passion, though among these the wisest have prescribed restraint, pressed moderation, and to all tyros in philosophy forbid the forward use of admiration, rapture, or ecstasy, even in the subjects they esteemed the highest and most divine. They knew very well that the first motion, appetite, and ardour of the youth in general towards philosophy and knowledge depended chiefly on this turn of temper:[2] yet were they well apprised, withal, that in the progress of this study, as well as in the affairs of life, the florid ideas and exalted fancies of this kind became the fuel of many incendiary passions; and that, in religious concerns particularly, the habit of admiration and contemplative delight would, by over-indulgence, too easily mount into high fanaticism or degenerate into abject superstition.

Upon the whole, therefore, according to our author, enthusiasm is in itself a very natural honest passion, and has properly nothing for its object but what is good and honest.[1] 'Tis apt indeed, he confesses, to run astray. And by modern example we know, perhaps yet better than by any ancient, that in religion the enthusiasm which works by love is subject to many strange irregularities, and that which works by fear to many monstrous and horrible superstitions. Mystics and fanatics are known to abound as well in our reformed as in the Romish churches. The pretended floods of grace poured into the bosoms of the quietists, pietists, and those who favour the ecstatic way of devotion, raise such transports as by their own proselytes are confessed to have something strangely agreeable, and in common with what ordinary lovers are used to feel. And it has been remarked by many that the female saints have been the greatest improvers of this soft part of religion. What truth there may be in the related operations of this pretended grace and amorous zeal, or in the accounts of what has usually passed between the saints of each sex, in these devout ecstasies, I shall leave the reader to examine, supposing he will find credible accounts sufficient to convince him of the dangerous progress of enthusiasm in this amorous lineage.

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[1] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 6.

[2] So the Stagirite: *διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν.* [" For it was through wonder that men first began, and do still begin, to philosophise."—Arist. *Metaph.* I. ii. 982 b.] See below, *Misc.* iv. ch. i., in the notes.

There are many branches indeed more vulgar, as that of fear, melancholy, consternation, suspicion, despair. And when the passion turns more towards the astonishing and frightful than the amiable and delightful side, it creates rather what we call superstition than enthusiasm. I must confess, withal, that what we commonly style zeal in matters of religion, is seldom without a mixture of both these extravagancies. The ecstatic motions of love and admiration are seldom unaccompanied with the horrors and consternations of a lower sort of devotion. These paroxysms of zeal are in reality as the hot and cold fits of an ague, and depend on the different and occasional views or aspects of the divinity, according as the worshipper is guided from without, or affected from within, by his particular constitution.[2]

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[1] *τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν.*

[2] *Infra, Misc.* ii. ch. iii., end.

Seldom are those aspects so determinate and fixed as to excite constantly one and the same spirit of devotion. In religions, therefore, which hold most of love, there is generally room left for terrors of the deepest kind. Nor is there any religion so diabolical as, in its representation of divinity, to leave no room for admiration and esteem. Whatever personage or spectre of divinity is worshipped, a certain esteem and love is generally affected by his worshippers. Or if, in the devotion paid him, there be in truth no real or absolute esteem, there is however a certain astonishing delight or ravishment excited.

This passion is experienced in common by every worshipper of the zealot kind. The motion, when unguided and left wholly to itself, is in its nature turbulent and incentive. It disjoints the natural frame and relaxes the ordinary tone or tenor of the mind. In this disposition the reins are let loose to all passion which arises; and the mind, as far as it is able to act or think in such a state, approves the riot, and justifies the wild effects by the supposed sacredness of the cause. Every dream and frenzy is made inspiration, every affection, zeal. And in this persuasion the zealots, no longer self-governed, but set adrift to the wide sea of passion, can in one and the same spirit of devotion exert the opposite passions of love and hatred, unite affectionately and abhor furiously, curse, bless, sing, mourn, exult, tremble, caress, assassinate, inflict and suffer martyrdom,[1] with a thousand other the most vehement efforts of variable and contrary affections.

The common heathen religion, especially in its latter age, when adorned with the most beautiful temples and rendered more illustrious by the munificence of the Roman senate and succeeding emperors, ran wholly into pomp, and was supported chiefly by that sort of enthusiasm which is raised from the external objects of grandeur, majesty, and what we call august.[1] On the other side, the Egyptian or Syrian religions, which lay more in mystery and concealed rites, having less dependence on the magistrate and less of that decorum of art, politeness, and magnificence, ran into a more pusillanimous, frivolous, and mean kind of superstition: "The observation of days, the forbearance of meats, and the contention about traditions, seniority of laws, and priority of godships."[2]

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[1] A passage of history comes to my mind, as it is cited by an eminent divine of our own Church, with regard to that spirit of martyrdom which furnishes, it seems, such solid matter for the opinion and faith of many zealots. The story, in the words of our divine, and with his own reflections on it, is as follows: "Two Franciscans offered themselves to the fire to prove Savonarola to be a heretic; but a certain Jacobine offered himself to the fire to prove that Savonarola had true revelations, and was no heretic. In the meantime Savonarola preached, but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of fire-ordeal. And

Summus utrinque
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus, quum solos credat habendos
Esse deos, quos ipse colit.[3]

History, withal, informs us of a certain establishment in Egypt which was very extraordinary, and must needs have had a very uncommon effect, no way advantageous to that nation in particular, or to the general society of mankind. We know very well that nothing is more injurious to the police or municipal constitution of any city or colony than the forcing of a particular trade. Nothing more dangerous than the over-peopling any manufacture, or multiplying the traders or dealers, of whatever vocation, beyond their natural proportion and the public demand. Now it happened of old, in this motherland of

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put case, all four had passed through the fire and died in the flames, what would that have proved? Had he been a heretic, or no heretic, the more or the less, for the confidence of these zealous idiots? If we mark it, a great many arguments whereon many sects rely are no better probation than this comes to."—Bishop Taylor in his dedicatory discourse, before his *Liberty of Prophesying*. See *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 3.

[1] *Infra, Misc.* ii. ch. ii.

[2] See *Moralists*, pt. iii. § 1.

[3] ["Hence a raging madness is abroad on both sides, because each place hates its neighbours' deities, since it believes that only its own objects of worship are Gods."—Juv. xv. 35-8.]

superstition, that the sons of certain artists were by law obliged always to follow the same calling with their fathers.[1] Thus the son of a priest was always a priest by birth, as was the whole lineage after him, without interruption. Nor was it a custom with this nation, as with others, to have only one single priest or priestess to a temple: but as the number of Gods and temples was infinite, so was that of the priests.[2] The religious foundations were without restriction, and to one single worship or temple as many of the holy order might be retainers as could raise a maintenance from the office.

Whatever happened to other races or professions, that of the priest, in all likelihood, must by this regulation have propagated the most of any. 'Tis a tempting circumstance to have so easy a mastery over the world, to subdue by wit instead of force, to practise on the passions and triumph over the judgment of mankind, to influence private families and public councils, conquer conquerors, control the magistrate himself, and govern without the envy which attends all other government or superiority. No wonder if such a profession was apt to multiply, especially when we consider the easy living and security of the professors, their exemption from all labour and hazard, the supposed sacredness of their character, and their free possession of wealth, grandeur, estates, and women.

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[1] *ἔστι δὲ Αἰγυπτίων ἑπτὰ γένεα· καὶ τούτων οἱ μέν, ἱρέες, οἱ δέ, μάχιμοι κεκλέαται.—οὐδὲ τούτοισιν ἔξεστι τέχνην ἐπασκῆσαι οὐδεμίην, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐς πόλεμον ἐπασκέουσι μοῦνα, παῖς παρὰ πατρὸς ἐκδεκόμενος.* ["The Egyptians are divided into seven classes—one of priests, one of warriors, etc. . . . The warriors may not practise any craft, but only that of war, which they inherit by birth."—Herodot. ii. 164, 166.]

ἱρᾶται δὲ οὐκ εἷς ἑκάστου τῶν θεῶν, ἀλλὰ πολλοὶ . . ἐπεὰν δέ τις ἀποθάνῃ, τούτου ὁ παῖς ἀντικατίσταται. ["Not one priest, but a whole college of priests, is consecrated to each god, . . . and when one priest dies his son is consecrated in his place."—*Ibid.* ii. 37.]

[2] *τῆς δὲ χώρας ἁπάσης εἰς τρία μέρη διῃρημένης*, etc. Cum tota regio in tres partes divisa sit, primam sibi portionem vendicat ordo sacerdotum, magna apud indigenas auctoritate pollens, tum ob pietatem in deos, tum quod multam ex eruditione scientiam ejusmodi homines afferunt. Ex reditibus autem suis cuncta per Aegyptum sacrificia procurant, ministros alunt; et propriis commoditatibus ancillantur, *ταῖς ἰδίαις χρείαις χορηγοῦσιν.* Non enim (Aegyptii) existimant fas esse deorum honores mutari, sed semper ab eisdem eodem ritu peragi: neque eos necessariorum copia destitui qui in commune omnibus consulunt. In universum namque de maximis rebus consulentes, indesinenter regi praesto sunt, in nonnullis tanquam participes imperii, in aliis reges, duces et magistri (*συνεργοί, εἰσηγηταί, διδάσκαλοι*) existentes. Ex astrologia quoque et sacrorum inspectione futura praedicunt, atque e sacrorum librorum scriptis res gestas cum utilitate conjunctas praelegunt. Non enim, ut apud Graecos, unus tantummodo vir aut foemina una sacerdotio fungitur; sed complures sacrificia et honores deum obeuntes liberis suis eandem vitae rationem quasi per manus tradunt. Hi autem cunctis oneribus sunt immunes, et primos post regem honoris

There was no need to invest such a body as this with rich lands and ample territories, as it happened in Egypt. The generation or tribe being once set apart as sacred, would without further encouragement be able, no doubt, in process of time to establish themselves a plentiful and growing fund or religious land-bank. 'Twas a sufficient donative to have had only that single privilege from the law,[1] "that they might retain what

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et potestatis gradus obtinent. ["The whole country being divided into three parts, the order of priests claims the first part. It enjoys great authority among the people, both for its piety toward the Gods and for its profound learning. Out of their revenues the priests find all the sacrifices for Egypt, pay their servants, and meet their own expenses. For the Egyptians do not think it lawful to change the rites of the Gods, but hold that they must be carried on unchanged by the same class of persons, and that those who watch for all must not lack bread. For the priests, perpetually watching for the general good, are ever by the king's side; and in some matters they share his power, in some they act as fellow-workers, advisers, teachers. They also foretell the future from astronomy and from the examination of victims, and from their sacred books they give useful teaching in history. For it is not as with the Greeks, among whom one man or one woman holds a priesthood, but several Egyptian priests attend to sacrifices and ritual, and they pass on the same way of life by inheritance to their children. They are exempted from all taxes, and they enjoy the first rank and dignity after the king."—Diod. Sic. i. 73. Shaftesbury chooses to cite this Greek author in a Latin version.]

[1] *Infra, Misc.* ii. ch. ii.

they could get, and that it might be lawful for their order to receive such estates by voluntary contribution, as could never afterwards be converted to other uses."

Now if, besides the method of propagation by descent, other methods of increase were allowed in this order of men, if volunteers were also admitted at pleasure, without any stint or confinement to a certain number, 'tis not difficult to imagine how enormous the growth would be of such a science or profession, thus recognised by the magistrate, thus invested with lands and power, and thus entitled to whatever extent of riches or possessions could be acquired by practice and influence over the superstitious part of mankind.

There were, besides, in Egypt some natural causes of superstition, beyond those which were common to other regions. This nation might well abound in prodigies, when even their country and soil itself was a kind of prodigy in nature. Their solitary idle life whilst shut up in their houses by the regular inundations of the Nile; the unwholesome vapours arising from the new mud and slimy relicts of their river exposed to the hot suns; their various meteors and phenomena, with the long vacancy they had to observe and comment on them; the necessity, withal, which, on the account of their navigation and the measure of their yearly drowned lands, compelled them to promote the studies of astronomy and other sciences, of which their priesthood could make good advantages—all these may be reckoned perhaps as additional causes of the immense growth of superstition, and the enormous increase of the priesthood in this fertile land.

'Twill, however, as I conceive, be found unquestionably true, according to political arithmetic, in every nation whatsoever, "that the quantity of superstition (if I may so speak) will in proportion nearly answer the number of priests, diviners, soothsayers, prophets, or such who gain their livelihood or receive advantages by officiating in religious affairs." For if these dealers are numerous, they will force a trade. And as the liberal hand of the magistrate can easily raise swarms of this kind where they are already but in a moderate proportion, so where through any other cause the number of these, increasing still by degrees, is suffered to grow beyond a certain measure, they will soon raise such a ferment in men's minds as will at least compel the magistrate, however sensible of the grievance, to be cautious in proceeding to a reform.

We may observe in other necessary professions, raised on the infirmities and defects of mankind (as, for instance, in law and physic), "that with the least help from the bounty or beneficence of the magistrate, the number of the professors and the subject-matter of the profession is found over and above increasing." New difficulties are started, new subjects of contention; deeds and instruments of law grow more numerous and prolix, hypotheses, methods, regimens, more various, and the materia medica more extensive and abundant. What, in process of time, must therefore naturally have happened in the case of religion among the Egyptians may easily be gathered.

Nor is it strange that we should find the property[1] and power of the Egyptian priesthood in ancient days arrived to such a height as in a manner to have swallowed up the state and monarchy. A worse accident befel the Persian crown, of which the hierarchy having got absolute possession, had once a fair chance for universal empire. Now that the Persian or Babylonian hierarchy was much after the model of the Egyptian, though different perhaps in rites and ceremonies, we may well judge, not only from the history of the Magi,[1] but from what is recorded of ancient colonies sent long before by the Egyptians into Chaldea[2] and the adjacent countries. And whether the Ethiopian model was from that of Egypt, or the Egyptian from that of Ethiopia (for each nation had its pretence[3]), we know by remarkable effects[4] that the Ethiopian empire was once in the same condition, the state having been wholly swallowed in the exorbitant power of their landed hierarchy. So true it is, "That dominion must naturally follow property." Nor is it possible, as I conceive, for any state or monarchy to withstand the encroachments of a growing hierarchy, founded on the model of these Egyptian and Asiatic priesthoods. No superstition will ever be wanting among the ignorant and vulgar whilst the able and crafty have a power to gain inheritances and possessions by working on this human weakness.

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[1] Which was one-third. *βουλομένην δὲ τὴν Ἶσιν*, etc. Sed cum Isis lucro etiam sacerdotes invitare vellet ad cultus istos (nempe Osiridis, mariti fato functi) tertiam eis terrae partem *εἰς προσόδους*, ad deorum ministeria et sacra munia, fruendam donavit. ["But as Isis wished to encourage the priests by gain also to the worship of her dead husband Osiris, she granted them one-third of the country, to employ its revenues for divine duties and sacrifices."—Diod. Sic. i. 21.] A remarkable effect of female superstition! See also the passage of the same historian, cited above, p. 182, in the notes.

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[1] See Treatise II. part ii. § 1. Herodotus gives us the history at length in his third book.

[2] Diod. Sic. i. 28, 81.

[3] Herodot. ii. 30, 104; and Diod. Sic. iii. 3.

[4] *κατὰ τὴν Μερόην οἱ περὶ τὰς τῶν θεῶν θεραπείας τε καὶ τιμὰς διατρίβοντες ἱερεῖς*, etc. Qui in Meroe (urbe, et insula primaria Aethiopum) deorum cultus et honores administrant sacerdotes (ordo autem hic maxima pollet auctoritate), quandocumque ipsis in mentem venerit, misso ad regem nuntio, vita se illum abdicare jubent. Oraculis enim deorum hoc edici: nec fas esse ab ullo mortalium, quod dii immortales jusserint, contemni. ["The priests who look after the ritual and worship of the Gods at Meröe (and very great is the authority of this order) send word to the king, whenever they think fit, that he must die; for so (they say) the oracles of the Gods enjoin, and what Gods command no mortal must disobey."—Diod. Sic. iii. 6.] So much for their kings; for as to subjects, the manner was related a little before. Unus ex lictoribus ad reum mittitur, signum mortis praeferens: quo ille viso domum abiens sibi mortem consciscit. ["One of their attendants is sent to the accused, bearing a sign of death; whereupon the accused goes home and kills himself."—Diod. Sic. iii. 5.] This the people of our days would call passive obedience and priestcraft, with a witness. But our historian proceeds: Et per superiores quidem aetates, non armis aut vi coacti, sed merae superstitionis *ὑπ 'αὐτῆς τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας* fascino mente capti reges, sacerdotibus morem gesserunt:

This is a fund which, by these allowances, will prove inexhaustible. New modes of worship, new miracles, new heroes, saints, divinities (which serve as new occasions for sacred donatives), will be easily supplied on the part of the religious orders, whilst the civil magistrate authorises the accumulative donation, and neither restrains the number or possessions of the sacred body.

We find, withal, that in the early days of this ancient priestly nation of whom we have been speaking, 'twas thought expedient also, for the increase of devotion, to enlarge their system of deity, and either by mystical genealogy, consecration, or canonisation, to multiply their revealed objects of worship and raise new personages of divinity in their religion. They proceeded, it seems, in process of time, to increase the number of their Gods,[1] so far that at last they became in a manner numberless. What odd shapes, species, and forms of deity were in latter times exhibited is well known. Scarce an animal or plant but was adopted into some share of divinity.

> O sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis
> Numina ![2]

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donec Ergamenes, Aethiopum rex (Ptolemaeo secundo rerum potiente), Graecorum disciplinae et philosophiae particeps, mandata illa primus adspernari ausus fuit. Nam hic animo, qui regem deceret, sumto, cum militum manu in locum inaccessum, ubi aureum fuit templum Aethiopum, profectus : omnes illos sacrificos jugulavit, et abolito more pristino, sacra pro arbitrio suo instauravit. ["In former generations the kings, not forced by arms, but simply bewitched by superstition, obeyed the priests. But Ergamenes, king of the Ethiopians in the time of Ptolemy II., who was initiated into Greek philosophy, was the first to despise their orders. With kingly courage he marched his soldiers upon the inaccessible spot where stood the golden temple of the Ethiopians, cut down all the priests, abolished the old usage, and rearranged the ritual to his own liking."—Diod. Sic. iii. 6.]

[1] *ὡς δὲ αὐτοὶ λέγουσι, ἔτεά ἐστι ἑπτακισχίλια καὶ μύρια ἐς Ἄμασιν βασιλεύσαντα, ἐπεί τε ἐκ τῶν ὀκτὼ θεῶν οἱ δυώδεκα θεοὶ ἐγένοντο.* ["By the Egyptians' own story it is 17,000 years from the time when the eight Gods grew into twelve down to the reign of Amasis."—Herodot. ii. 43.]

[2] ["O pious nation, for whom Gods like these grow in the garden !"—Juv. xv. 10.]

No wonder if by a nation so abounding in religious orders, spiritual conquests were sought in foreign countries, colonies led abroad,[1] and missionaries detached on expeditions in this prosperous service. 'Twas thus a zealot people, influenced of old by their very region and climate, and who through a long tract of time, under a peculiar policy, had been raised both by art and nature to an immense growth in religious science and mystery, came by degrees to spread their variety of rites and ceremonies, their distinguishing marks of separate worships and secret communities, through the distant world, but chiefly through their neighbouring and dependent countries.

We understand from history that even when the Egyptian state was least powerful in arms, it was still respected for its religion and mysteries. It drew strangers from all parts to behold its wonders. And the fertility of its soil forced the adjacent people, and wandering nations who lived dispersed in single tribes, to visit them, court their alliance, and solicit a trade and commerce with them, on whatsoever terms. The strangers, no doubt, might well receive religious rites and doctrines from those to whom they owed their maintenance and bread.

Before the time that Israel was constrained to go down to Egypt and sue for maintenance to these powerful dynasties or lowland states, the holy patriarch Abraham himself had been necessitated to this compliance on the same account.[1] He applied in the same manner to the Egyptian court. He was at first well received and handsomely presented, but afterwards ill-used and out of favour with the prince, yet suffered to depart the kingdom and retire with his effects, without any attempt of recalling him again by force, as it happened in the case of his posterity. 'Tis certain that if this holy patriarch, who first instituted the sacred rite of circumcision within his own family or tribe, had no regard to any policy or religion of the Egyptians, yet he had formerly been a guest and inhabitant in Egypt (where historians mention this to have been a national rite[2]), long ere he had received any divine notice or revelation concerning this affair.[3] Nor was it in religion merely that this reverend guest was said to have derived knowledge and learning from the Egyptians. 'Twas from this parent-country of occult sciences that he was presumed, together with other wisdom, to have learnt that of judicial astrology,[4] as his successors did afterwards other prophetical and miraculous arts, proper to the Magi or priesthood of this land.

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[1] *οἱ δὲ οὖν Αἰγύπτιοι*, etc. Aegyptii plurimas colonias ex Aegypto in orbem terrarum disseminatas fuisse dicunt. In Babylonem colonos deduxit Belus, qui Neptuni et Libyae filius habetur: et posita ad Euphratem sede, instituit sacerdotes ad morem Aegyptiorum exemptos impensis et oneribus publicis, quos Babylonii vocant Chaldaeos, qui, exemplo sacerdotum et physicorum, astrologorumque in Aegypto, observant stellas. ["The Egyptians say that very many colonies were scattered over the world from Egypt. Belus, who is reputed son of Poseidon and Libya, led colonists to Babylon. After planting his town on the Euphrates, he instituted priests after the Egyptian fashion, exempt from taxes and public burdens; these, whom the Babylonians call Chaldeans, like the priests and the men of science and the astronomers in Egypt, watch the stars."—Diod. Sic. i. 28, also 81.]

One cannot indeed but observe, in after times, the strange

[1] Gen. xii. 10, etc.

[2] Abramus, quando Aegyptum ingressus est, nondum circumcisus erat, neque per annos amplius viginti post reditum. . . . Illius posteri circumcisi sunt, et ante introitum, et dum in Aegypto commorati sunt: post exitum vero non sunt circumcisi, quamdiu vixit Moses. "Fecit itaque Josue cultros lapideos, et circumcidit filios Israel in colle praeputiorum. Factum Deus ratum habuit, dixitque, Hodie ἀφεῖλον τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν Αἰγύπτου ἀφ' ὑμῶν, abstuli opprobrium Aegypti a vobis." Josue, v. 3. Tam Aegyptiis quam Judaeis opprobrio erant incircumcisi. Apud Aegyptios circumcidendi ritus vetustissimus fuit, et ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ab ipso initio institutus. Illi nullorum aliorum hominum institutis uti volunt. Herodot. ii. 91. τὰ αἰδοῖα ῷ ἄλλοι μὲν ἐῶσι ὡς ἐγένοντο, πλὴν ὅσοι ἀπὸ τούτων ἔμαθον· Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ περιτάμνονται. ["The Egyptians practise circumcision, but no other people do so except those who have learned it from the Egyptians."—Herodot. ii. 36.]—Marshami *Chronicus Canon*, p. 72.

[3] Gen. xvii.

[4] Julius Firmicus, *apud* Marshamum, pp. 452, 453.

adherence and servile dependency of the whole Hebrew race on the Egyptian nation. It appears that though they were of old abused in the person of their grand patriarch; though afterwards held in bondage, and treated as the most abject slaves; though twice expelled, or necessitated to save themselves by flight out of this oppressive region, yet in the very instant of their last retreat, whilst they were yet on their march, conducted by visible Divinity, supplied and fed from heaven, and supported by continual miracles, they notwithstanding inclined so strongly to the manners, the religion, rites, diet, customs, laws and constitutions of their tyrannical masters, that it was with the utmost difficulty they could be withheld from returning again into the same subjection.[1] Nor could their great captains and legislators prevent their relapsing perpetually into the same worship to which they had been so long accustomed.[1]

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[1] It can scarce be said in reality, from what appears in Holy Writ, that their retreat was voluntary. And for the historians of other nations, they have presumed to assert that this people was actually expelled Egypt on account of their leprosy, to which the Jewish laws appear to have so great a reference. Thus Tacitus: Plurimi auctores consentiunt, orta per Aegyptum tabe, quae corpora foedaret, regem Occhorim, adito Hammonis oraculo, remedium petentem, purgari regnum, et id genus hominum ut invisum deis, alias in terras avehere jussum. Sic conquisitum collectumque vulgus, . . . Mosen unum monuisse, etc. ["Several authors agree that when a disfiguring disease spread among the Egyptians, king Bocchoris consulted the oracle of Hammon, and was bidden to purge the kingdom and remove from it that class of men (the sick) as offensive to the Gods. So when the mob was hunted up and got together . . . Moses alone advised," etc.—Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 3.] Aegyptii, quum scabiem et vitiliginem paterentur, responso moniti eum (Mosen) cum aegris, ne pestis ad plures serperet, terminis Aegypti pellunt. Dux igitur exulum factus, sacra Aegyptiorum furto abstulit: quae repetentes armis Aegyptii, domum redire tempestatibus compulsi sunt. ["When the Egyptians were suffering from leprosy they were warned by an oracle to expel Moses and the sick from Egypt, lest the disease should spread further. Becoming therefore leader of the exiles, Moses stole the sacred objects of the Egyptians; and when the Egyptians tried to recapture these, they were driven home by storms."—Justin, xxxvi. 2.] And in Marsham we find this remarkable citation from Manetho: Amenophin regem affectasse *θεῶν γενέσθαι θεατήν, ὥσπερ Ὧρ εἷς τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βεβασιλευκότων*, deorum esse contemplatorem,

How far the divine Providence might have indulged the stubborn habit and stupid humour of this people, by giving them laws (as the Prophet says[2]) which he himself approved not, I have no intention to examine. This only I pretend to

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sicut Orum quendam regum priorum. Cui responsum est, *ὅτι δυνήσεται θεοὺς ἰδεῖν*, quod posset videre deos, si regionem a leprosis et immundis hominibus purgaret. ["That king Amenophis desired to see the Gods, like Orus, an earlier king, and received the answer from an oracle that he might see the Gods if he cleared the country of filthy lepers."—*Chronicus Canon*, p. 52.]

[1] See what is cited above (p. 189, in the notes from Marsham) of the Jews returning to circumcision under Joshua, after a generation's intermission; this being approved by God, for the reason given, "That it was taking from them the reproach of the Egyptians, or what rendered them odious and impious in the eyes of that people." Compare with this the passage concerning Moses himself, Exod. iv. 18, 25, 26 (together with Acts vii. 30, 34), where in regard to the Egyptians, to whom he was now returning when fourscore years of age, he appears to have circumcised his children, and taken off this national reproach; Zipporah, his wife, nevertheless, reproaching him with the bloodiness of the deed, to which she appears to have been a party only through necessity, and in fear rather of her husband than of God.

[2] Ezek. xx. 25; Acts xv. 10. Of these Egyptian institutions received amongst the Jews, see our Spencer. Cum morum quorundam antiquorum toleratio vi magna polleret, ad Hebraeorum animos Dei legi et cultui conciliandos, et a reformatione Mosaica invidiam omnem amoliretur; maxime conveniebat, ut Deus ritus aliquos antiquitus usitatos in sacrorum suorum numerum assumeret, et lex a Mose data speciem aliquam cultus olim recepti ferret. . . . Ita nempe nati factique erant Israelitae, ex Aegypto recens egressi, quod Deo pene necesse esset (humanitus loqui fas sit) rituum aliquorum veterum usum iis indulgere, et illius instituta ad eorum morem et modulum accommodare. Nam populus erat a teneris Aegypti moribus assuetus, et in iis multorum annorum usu confirmatus. . . . Hebraei, non tantum Aegypti moribus assueti, sed etiam refractarii fuerunt. . . . Quemadmodum cujusque regionis et terrae populo sua sunt ingenia, moresque proprii, ita natura gentem Hebraeorum, praeter caeteros orbis incolas, ingenio moroso, difficili, et ad infamiam usque pertinaci, finxit. . . . Cum itaque veteres Hebraei moribus essent asperis et efferatis adeo,

infer from what has been advanced, "that the manners, opinions, rites, and customs of the Egyptians had, in the earliest times and from generation to generation, strongly influenced the Hebrew people (their guests and subjects), and had undoubtedly gained a powerful ascendency over their natures."

How extravagant soever the multitude of the Egyptian superstitions may appear, 'tis certain that their doctrine and wisdom were in high repute, since it is taken notice of in Holy Scripture as no small advantage even to Moses himself, "that he had imbibed the wisdom of this nation,"[1] which, as is well known, lay chiefly among their priests and Magi.

Before the time that the great Hebrew legislator received his education among these sages, a Hebrew slave,[2] who came

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populi conditio postulavit, ut Deos ritus aliquos usu veteri firmatos iis concederet, et νομικὴν λατρείαν τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἀσθενείᾳ συμβαίνουσαν (uti loquitur Theodoretus) cultum legalem eorum infirmitati accommodatum instituerit. . . . Hebraei superstitiosa gens erant, et omni pene literatura destituti. Quam alte gentium superstitionibus immergebantur, e legibus intelligere licet, quae populo tanquam remedia superstitionis imponebantur. Contumax autem bellua superstitio, si praesertim ab ignorantiae tenebris novam ferociam et contumaciam hauserit. Facile vero credi potest, Israelitas, nuper e servorum domo liberatos, artium humaniorum rudes fuisse, et vix quicquam supra lateres atque allium Aegypti sapuisse. Quando itaque Deo jam negotium esset, cum populo tam barbaro, et superstitioni tam impense dedito; pene necesse fuit, ut aliquid eorum infirmitati daret, eosque dolo quodam (non argumentis) ad seipsum alliceret. Nullum animal superstitioso, rudi praecipue, morosius est, aut majori arte tractandum.—Spencerus, *De Leg. Hebr.* pp. 627, 628, 629.

[1] (1) καὶ ἐπαιδεύθη Μωσῆς πάσῃ σοφίᾳ Αἰγυπτίων· ἦν δὲ δυνατὸς ἐν λόγοις καὶ ἐν ἔργοις. Act. Apost. vii. 22.

(2) Exod. vii. 11, 22.

(3) *Ibid.* viii. 7.

(4) Justin, xxxvi. 2.

[2] Gen. xxxix., etc. Minimus aetate inter fratres Joseph fuit, cujus excellens ingenium veriti fratres clam interceptum peregrinis mercatoribus vendiderunt. A quibus deportatus in Aegyptum, cum magicas ibi artes solerti ingenio percepisset, brevi ipsi regi percarus fuit. ["Joseph was the youngest of the brothers, and they, fearing his cleverness, kidnapped

a youth into the Egyptian Court, had already grown so powerful in this kind of wisdom, as to outdo the chief diviners, prognosticators and interpreters of Egypt. He raised himself to be chief minister to a prince, who, following his advice, obtained in a manner the whole property, and consequently the absolute dominion of that land. But to what height of power the established priesthood was arrived even at that time, may be conjectured hence: "that the crown (to speak in a modern style) offered not to meddle with the church lands"; and that in this great revolution nothing was attempted, so much as by way of purchase or exchange,[1] in prejudice of this landed clergy, the prime minister himself having joined his interest with theirs, and entered by marriage into their alliance.[2] And in this he was followed by the great founder of the Hebrew state. For he also matched himself with the priesthood of some of the neighbouring nations[3] and traders[4] into Egypt, long ere his establishment of the Hebrew religion and commonwealth. Nor had he perfected his model till he consulted the foreign priest, his father-in-law,[5] to whose advice he paid such remarkable deference.

But to resume the subject of our speculation concerning the wide diffusion of the priestly science or function, it appears from what has been said, that notwithstanding the Egyptian priesthood was by ancient establishment hereditary, the skill of divining, soothsaying, and magic was communicated to others besides their national sacred body; and that the wisdom of the magicians, their power of miracles, their interpretation of dreams and visions, and their art of administering in divine affairs, were entrusted even to foreigners who resided amongst them.

him and sold him to foreign merchants. These men carried him to Egypt, where he quickly learned magic and rose to high favour even with the king."—Justin, xxxvi. 2.]

[1] Gen. xlvii. 22, 26.

[2] Gen. xli. 45.

[3] Exod. iii. 1, and xviii. 1, etc.

[4] Such were the Midianites, Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36.

[5] Exod. xviii. 17-24.

It appears withal, from these considerations, how apt the religious profession was to spread itself widely in this region of the world, and what efforts would naturally be made by the more necessitous of these unlimited professors towards a fortune or maintenance, for themselves and their successors.

Common arithmetic will, in this case, demonstrate to us "that as the proportion of so many laymen to each priest grew every day less and less, so the wants and necessities of each priest must grow more and more." The magistrate too, who, according to this Egyptian regulation, had resigned his title or share of right in sacred things, could no longer govern as he pleased in these affairs, or check the growing number of these professors. The spiritual generations were left to prey on others, and (like fish of prey) even on themselves, when destitute of other capture and confined within too narrow limits. What method therefore, was there left to heighten the zeal of worshippers and augment their liberality, but "to foment their emulation, prefer worship to worship, faith to faith, and turn the spirit of enthusiasm to the side of sacred horror, religious antipathy, and mutual discord between worshippers"?

Thus provinces and nations were divided by the most contrary rites and customs which could be devised in order to create the strongest aversion possible between creatures of a like species. For when all other animosities are allayed, and anger of the fiercest kind appeased, the religious hatred, we find, continues still, as it began, without provocation or voluntary offence. The presumed misbeliever and blasphemer, as one rejected and abhorred of God, is, through a pious imitation, abhorred by the adverse worshipper whose enmity must naturally increase as his religious zeal increases.

From hence the opposition rose of temple against temple, proselyte against proselyte. The most zealous worship of one God was best expressed (as they conceived) by the open defiance of another. Surnames and titles of divinity passed as watch-words. He who had not the symbol nor could give the word received the knock.

> Down with him! Kill him! Merit heaven thereby;

as our poet has it in his American tragedy.[1]

Nor did philosophy,[2] when introduced into religion, extinguish but rather inflame this zeal, as we may show perhaps in our following chapter more particularly, if we return again, as is likely, to this subject. For this, we perceive, is of a kind apt enough to grow upon our hands. We shall here therefore observe only what is obvious to every student in sacred antiquities, that from the contentious learning and sophistry of the ancient schools (when true science, philosophy, and arts were already deep in their decline[3]) religious problems of a like contentious form sprang up, and certain doctrinal tests were framed by which religious parties were engaged and listed against one another, with more animosity than in any other cause or quarrel had been ever known. Thus religious massacres began, and were carried on; temples were demolished, holy utensils destroyed, the sacred pomp trodden under-foot, insulted, and the insulters in their turn exposed to the same treatment in their persons as well as in their worship. Thus madness and confusion were brought upon the world, like that chaos which the poet miraculously describes in the mouth of his mad hero, when even in celestial places disorder and blindness reigned; "No dawn of light"—

> "No glimpse or starry spark,
> But Gods met Gods, and justled in the dark."[4]

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[1] Dryden, *Indian Emperor*, Act v. Sc. 2.

[2] *Infra*, *Misc.* ii. ch. ii.

[3] Treatise III. part ii. § 1; and part iii. § 3 in the notes. *Infra*, *Misc.* ii. ch. ii.

[4] *Oedipus* of Dryden and Lee.

CHAPTER II

Judgment of divines and grave authors concerning enthusiasm—Reflections upon scepticism—A sceptic Christian—Judgment of the inspired concerning their own inspirations—Knowledge and belief—History of religion resumed—Zeal offensive and defensive—A Church in danger—Persecution—Policy of the Church of Rome.

What I had to remark of my own concerning enthusiasm I have thus dispatched; what others have remarked on the same subject I may, as an apologist to another author, be allowed to cite, especially if I take notice only of what has been dropped very naturally by some of our most approved authors and ablest divines.

It has been thought an odd kind of temerity in our author to assert,[1] "that even atheism itself was not wholly exempt from enthusiasm, that there have been in reality enthusiastical atheists, and that even the spirit of martyrdom could, upon occasion, exert itself as well in this cause as in any other." Now, besides what has been intimated in the preceding chapter, and what in fact may be demonstrated from the examples of Vaninus and other martyrs of a like principle, we may hear an excellent and learned divine,[2] of highest authority at home and fame abroad, who after having described an enthusiastical atheist and one atheistically inspired, says of this very sort of men "that they are fanatics too, however that word seem to have a more peculiar respect to something of a deity; all atheists being that blind Goddess Nature's fanatics."

And again, "All atheists," says he, "are possessed with a certain kind of madness that may be called pneumatophobia,[3] that makes them have an irrational but desperate abhorrence from spirits or incorporeal substances; they being acted also, at the same time, with an hylomania, whereby they madly dote upon matter, and devoutly worship it as the only numen."

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[1] Viz. in his *Letter concerning Enthusiasm.*

[2] Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, p. 134.

[3] The good doctor makes use here of a stroke of raillery against the over-frighted anti-superstitious gentlemen, with whom our author reasons

What the power of ecstasy is, whether through melancholy, wine, love, or other natural causes, another learned divine[1] of our church, in a discourse upon enthusiasm, sets forth, bringing an example from Aristotle "of a Syracusean poet who never versified so well as when he was in his distracted fits." But as to poets in general, compared with the religious enthusiasts, he says, there is this difference, "that a poet is an enthusiast in jest, and an enthusiast is a poet in good earnest."

"'Tis a strong temptation, says the doctor,[2] with a melancholist, when he feels a storm of devotion and zeal come upon him like a mighty wind, his heart being full of affection, his

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at large in his second Treatise (part ii. § 1). 'Tis indeed the nature of fear, as of all other passions, when excessive, to defeat its own end and prevent us in the execution of what we naturally propose to ourselves as our advantage. Superstition itself is but a certain kind of fear, which possessing us strongly with the apprehended wrath or displeasure of divine powers, hinders us from judging what those powers are in themselves, or what conduct of ours may, with best reason, be thought suitable to such highly rational and superior natures. Now if from the experience of many gross delusions of a superstitious kind the course of this fear begins to turn, 'tis natural for it to run with equal violence a contrary way. The extreme passion for religious objects passes into an aversion. And a certain horror and dread of imposture causes as great a disturbance as even imposture itself had done before. In such a situation as this, the mind may easily be blinded, as well in one respect as in the other. 'Tis plain both these disorders carry something with them which discovers us to be in some manner beside our reason, and out of the right use of judgment and understanding. For how can we be said to intrust or use our reason if in any case we fear to be convinced? How are we masters of ourselves when we have acquired the habit of bringing horror, aversion, favour, fondness, or any other temper than that of mere indifference and impartiality into the judgment of opinions and search of truth?

[1] Dr. More, §§ 11, 19, 20, and so on.

[2] § 16.

head pregnant with clear and sensible representations, and his mouth flowing and streaming with fit and powerful expressions, such as would astonish an ordinary auditory;[1] 'tis, I say, a shrewd temptation to him to think it the very spirit of God that then moves supernaturally in him, whenas all that excess of zeal and affection and fluency of words is most palpably to be resolved into the power of melancholy, which is a kind of natural inebriation."

The learned doctor, with much pains afterwards, and by help of the peripatetic philosophy, explains this enthusiastic inebriation, and shows in particular[2] "how the vapours and fumes of melancholy partake of the nature of wine."

One might conjecture from hence that the malicious opposers of early Christianity were not unversed in this philosophy, when they sophistically objected against the apparent force of the divine spirit speaking in divers languages, and attributed it "to the power of new wine."[3]

But our devout and zealous doctor seems to go yet further. For besides what he says of the enthusiastic power[4] of fancy in atheists, he calls melancholy[5] a pertinacious and religious complexion, and asserts "that there is not any true spiritual grace from God, but this mere natural constitution, according to the several tempers and workings of it, will not only resemble, but sometimes seem to outstrip." And after speaking of prophetical enthusiasm,[6] and establishing (as our author[7] does) a legitimate and a bastard sort, he asserts and justifies the devotional enthuiasm[8] (as he calls it) of holy and sincere souls, and ascribes this also to melancholy.

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[1] It appears from hence that in the notion which this learned divine gives us of enthusiasm, he comprehends the social or popular genius of the passion; agreeably with what our author in his *Letter concerning Enthusiasm* has said of the influence and power of the assembly and auditory itself, and of the communicative force and rapid progress of this ecstatic fervour, once kindled and set in action.

[2] §§ 20, 22, 23, 26.

[3] Acts ii. 13.

[4] § 1.

[5] § 15.

[6] §§ 30 and 57.

[7] Treatise I. § 6.

[8] § 63.

He allows "that the soul may sink so far into phantasms as not to recover the use of her free faculties, and that this enormous strength of imagination does not only beget the belief of mad internal apprehensions, but is able to assure us of the presence of external objects which are not." He adds, "that what custom and education do by degrees, distempered fancy may do in a shorter time." And speaking of ecstasy[1] and the power of melancholy in ecstatic fancies, he says "that what the imagination then puts forth, of herself, is as clear as broad day, and the perception of the soul at least as strong and vigorous as at any time in beholding things awake."

From whence the doctor infers "that the strength of perception is no sure ground of truth."

Had any other than a reverend father of our church expressed himself in this manner, he must have been contented perhaps to bear a sufficient charge of scepticism.

'Twas a good fortune in my Lord Bacon's case that he should have escaped being called an atheist or a sceptic,[2] when, speaking in a solemn manner of the religious passion, the ground of superstition or enthusiasm (which he also terms a panic[3]), he derives it from an imperfection in the creation, make, or natural

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[1] § 28.

[2] [As a matter of fact he did not escape it. See the preface (*Author to Reader*) to Francis Osborn's *Miscellany of Sundry Essays*, etc., in his Works, 7th. ed., 1673.]

[3] Natura rerum omnibus viventibus indidit metum et formidinem, vitae atque essentiae suae conservatricem, ac mala ingruentia vitantem et depellentem. Verumtamen eadem natura modum tenere nescia est, sed timoribus salutaribus semper vanos et inanes admiscet: adeo ut omnia (si intus conspici darentur) panicis terroribus plenissima sint, praesertim humana; et maxime omnium apud vulgum, qui superstitione (quae vere nihil aliud quam panicus terror est) in immensum laborat et agitatur; praecipue temporibus duris et trepidis et adversis.—Franciscus Bacon *de Augment. Scient.*, lib. ii. c. 13.

The author of the letter, I dare say, would have expected no quarter from his critics, had he expressed himself as this celebrated author here quoted, who by his Natura Rerum can mean nothing less than the universal constitution of man. How far the author of the letter[1] differs from this author in his opinion both of the end and foundation of this passion, may appear from what has been said above. And, in general, from what we read in the other succeeding treatises of our author we may venture to say of him with assurance, "that he is as little a sceptic (according to the vulgar sense of that word) as he is Epicurean or atheist." This may be proved sufficiently from his philosophy; and for anything higher, 'tis what he nowhere presumes to treat, having forborne in particular to mention any holy mysteries of our religion, or sacred article of our belief.

As for what relates to revelation in general,[2] if I mistake not our author's meaning, he professes to believe, as far as is possible for any one who himself had never experienced any divine communication, whether by dream, vision, apparition, or other supernatural operation; nor was ever present as eye-witness of any sign, prodigy, or miracle whatsoever. Many of these,[3] he observes, are at this day pretendedly exhibited in the world with an endeavour of giving them the perfect air and exact resemblance of those recorded in Holy Writ. He speaks indeed with contempt of the mockery of modern miracles and inspiration. And as to all pretences to things of this kind in our present age, he seems inclined to look upon them as no better than mere imposture or delusion. But for what is recorded of ages heretofore, he seems to resign his judgment, with entire condescension, to his superiors. He pretends not to frame any certain or positive opinion of his own, notwithstanding his best searches into antiquity and the nature of religious record and traditions; but on all occasions submits most willingly, and

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dispensing Nature, erring blindly in the very first design, contrivance, or original frame of things, according to the opinion of Epicurus himself, whom this author immediately after cites with praise.

[1] Viz. the *Letter concerning Enthusiasm*, above.

[2] *Infra*, *Misc.* v. 3.

[3] *Letter concerning Enthusiasm*, § 6; *Moralists*, part ii. § 5.

with full confidence and trust, to the opinions[1] by law established. And if this be not sufficient to free him from the reproach of scepticism, he must, for aught I see, be content to undergo it.

To say truth, I have often wondered to find such a disturbance raised about the simple name of sceptic.[2] 'Tis certain that, in its original and plain signification, the word imports no more than barely "that state or frame of mind in which every one remains on every subject of which he is not certain." He who is certain, or presumes to say he knows is in that particular, whether he be mistaken or in the right, a dogmatist. Between these two states or situations of mind there can be no medium. For he who says "that he believes for certain, or is assured of what he believes," either speaks ridiculously or says in effect "that he believes strongly, but is not sure." So that whoever is not conscious of revelation, nor has certain knowledge of any miracle or sign, can be no more than sceptic in the case; and the best Christian in the world, who being destitute of the means of certainty depends only on history and tradition for his belief in these particulars, is at best but a sceptic Christian. He has no more than a nicely critical[3] historical faith, subject to various speculations, and a thousand different criticisms of languages and literature.

This he will naturally find to be the case if he attempts to search into originals in order to be his own judge, and proceed on the bottom of his own discernment and understanding. If, on the other hand, he is no critic, nor competently learned in these originals, 'tis plain he can have no original judgment of his own, but must rely still on the opinion of those who have opportunity to examine such matters, and whom he takes to be the unbiassed and disinterested judges of these religious narratives. His faith is not in ancient facts or persons, nor in the ancient writ, or primitive recorders; nor in the successive collators or conservators of these records (for of these he is unable to take cognisance). But his confidence and trust must be in those modern men, or societies of men, to whom the public or he himself ascribes the judgment of these records, and commits the determination of sacred writ and genuine story.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* towards the end; *Misc.* ii. 3; v. 1, 3.

[2] *Moralists,* part i. § 2; *Misc.* v. 3.

[3] *Wit and Humour,* part iv. § 3; *Misc.* v. 3.

Let the person seem ever so positive or dogmatical in these high points of learning, he is yet in reality no dogmatist, nor can any way free himself from a certain kind of scepticism. He must know himself still capable of doubting; or if, for fear of it, he strives to banish every opposite thought, and resolves not so much as to deliberate on the case, this still will not acquit him. So far are we from being able to be sure when we have a mind; that indeed we can never be thoroughly sure, but then only when we can't help it, and find of necessity we must be so, whether we will or not. Even the highest implicit faith is in reality no more than a kind of passive scepticism; "a resolution to examine, recollect, consider, or hear as little as possible to the prejudice of that belief, which having once espoused we are ever afterwards afraid to lose."

If I might be allowed to imitate our author, in daring to touch now and then upon the characters of our divine worthies, I should, upon this subject of belief, observe how fair and generous the great Christian convert and learned apostle has shown himself in his sacred writings. Notwithstanding he had himself an original testimony and revelation from heaven on which he grounded his conversion; notwithstanding he had in his own person the experience of outward miracles and inward communications; he condescended still, on many occasions, to speak sceptically, and with some hesitation and reserve, as to the certainty of these divine exhibitions. In his account of some transactions of this kind, himself being the witness, and speaking (as we may presume) of his own person and proper vision,[1] he says only that "he knew a man, whether in the body or out of it, he cannot tell. But such a one caught up to the third heaven he knew formerly, he says, above fourteen years before his then writing." And when in another capacity the same inspired writer, giving precepts to his disciples, distinguishes what[1] he writes by divine commission from what he delivers as his own judgment and private opinion, he condescends nevertheless to speak as one no way positive, or master of any absolute criterion in the case. And in several subsequent[2] passages he expresses himself as under some kind of doubt how to judge or determine certainly, "whether he writes by inspiration or otherwise. He only "thinks he has the spirit." He "is not sure," nor would have us to depend on him as positive or certain in a matter of so nice discernment.

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[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3.

The holy founders and inspired authors of our religion required not, it seems, so strict an assent, or such implicit faith in behalf of their original writings and revelations, as later uninspired doctors, without the help of divine testimony or any miracle on their side, have required in behalf of their own comments and interpretations. The earliest and worst of heretics, 'tis said, were those called Gnostics, who took their name from an audacious pretence to certain knowledge and comprehension of the greatest mysteries of faith. If the most dangerous state of opinion was this dogmatical and presumptuous sort, the safest, in all likelihood, must be the sceptical and modest.

There is nothing more evident than that our holy religion, in its original constitution, was set so far apart from all philosophy or refined speculation, that it seemed in a manner diametrically opposed to it. A man might have been not only a sceptic in all the controverted points of the academies or schools of learning, but even a perfect stranger to all of this kind; and yet complete in his religion, faith, and worship.

Among the polite heathens of the ancient world, these different provinces of religion and philosophy were upheld, we know, without the least interfering with each other. If in some barbarous nations the philosopher and priest were joined in one, 'tis observable that the mysteries, whatever they were, which sprang from this extraordinary conjunction were kept secret and undivulged. 'Twas satisfaction enough to the priest-philosopher, if the initiated party preserved his respect and veneration for the tradition and worship of the temple, by complying in every respect with the requisite performances and rites of worship. No account was afterwards taken of the philosophic faith of the proselyte or worshipper. His opinions were left to himself, and he might philosophise according to what foreign school or sect he fancied. Even amongst the Jews themselves, the Sadducee (a materialist and denier of the soul's immortality) was as well admitted as the Pharisee; who from the schools of Pythagoras, Plato, or other latter philosophers of Greece, had learnt to reason upon immaterial substances, and the natural immortality of souls.

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[1] 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 40.

'Tis no astonishing reflection to observe how fast the world declined in wit and sense,[1] in manhood, reason, science, and in every art when once the Roman Empire had prevailed and spread an universal tyranny and oppression over mankind. Even the Romans themselves, after the early sweets of one peaceful and long reign, began to groan under that yoke of which they had been themselves the imposers. How much more must other nations and mighty cities at a far distance have abhorred this tyranny, and detected their common servitude under a people who were themselves no better than mere slaves?

It may be looked upon, no doubt, as providential, that at this time, and in these circumstances of the world, there should arise so high an expectation of a divine deliverer; and that from the eastern parts and confines of Judea, the opinion should spread itself of such a deliverer to come, with strength from heaven sufficient to break that Empire, which no earthly power remaining could be thought sufficient to encounter. Nothing could have better disposed the generality of mankind to receive the evangelical advice whilst they mistook the news, as many of the first Christians plainly did, and understood the promises of a Messias in this temporal sense, with respect to his second coming and sudden reign here upon earth.

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[1] *Advice*, part ii. § 1, and in the preceding chapter, at the end.

Superstition,[1] in the meanwhile, could not but naturally prevail, as misery and ignorance increased. The Roman emperors, as they grew more barbarous, grew so much the more superstitious. The lands and revenues as well as the numbers of the heathen priests grew daily. And when the season came, that by means of a convert-emperor the heathen[2] church-lands, with an increase of power, became transferred to the Christian clergy, 'twas no wonder if by such riches and authority they were in no small measure influenced and corrupted, as may be gathered even from the accounts given us of these matters by themselves.

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[1] *Wit and Humour,* part iv. § 1, and below, p. 213.

[2] How rich and vast these were, especially in the latter times of that Empire, may be judged from what belonged to the single order of the vestals, and what we read of the revenues belonging to the temples of the sun (as in the time of the monster Heliogabalus) and of other donations by other emperors. But what may give us yet a greater idea of these riches, is, that in the latter heathen times, which grew more and more superstitious, the restraining laws (or statutes of Mortmain) by which men had formerly been withheld from giving away estates by will or otherwise to religious uses were repealed; and the heathen church left in this manner as a bottomless gulf and devouring receptacle of land and treasure. Senatus-consulto, et constitutionibus principum, haeredes instituere concessum est Apollinem Didymaeum, Dianam Ephesiam, matrem deorum, etc. Ulpianus *post Cod. Theodos.* p. 92, *apud* Marsh.

This answers not amiss to the modern practice and expression of making our son our heir, giving to God what has been taken sometimes with freedom enough from man, and conveying estates in such a manner in this world as to make good interest of them in another. The reproach of the ancient satirist is at present out of doors. 'Tis no affront to religion nowadays to compute its profits. And a man might well be accounted dull, who, in our present age, should ask the question, Dicite, pontifices, in sacro quid facit aurum? [" Reverend pontiffs, tell us what good gold can do in a holy place?" Persius, ii. 69, Conington's translation.] See below, p. 213, and ch. iii., in the notes, and p. 211.

When, together with this, the schools of the ancient philosophers,[1] which had been long in their decline, came now to be dissolved, and their sophistic teachers became ecclesiastical instructors, the unnatural union of religion and philosophy was completed, and the monstrous product of this match appeared soon in the world. The odd exterior shapes of deities, temples, and holy utensils, which by the Egyptian sects[2] had been formerly set in battle against each other, were now metamorphosed into philosophical forms and phantoms; and, like flags and banners, displayed in hostile manner, and borne offensively by one party against another. In former times those barbarous nations above mentioned were the sole warriors in these religious causes; but now the whole world became engaged when instead of storks and crocodiles other ensigns were erected; when sophistical chimeras, crabbed notions, bombastic phrases, solecisms, absurdities, and a thousand monsters of a scholastic brood were set on foot, and made the subject of vulgar animosity and dispute.

Here first began that spirit of bigotry which broke out in a more raging manner than had been ever known before, and was less capable of temper or moderation than any species, form, or mixture of religion in the ancient world. Mysteries which were heretofore treated with profound respect, and lay unexposed to vulgar eyes, became public and prostitute, being enforced with terrors, and urged with compulsion and violence on the unfitted capacities and apprehensions of mankind. The very Jewish traditions and cabalistic learning underwent this fate. That which was naturally the subject of profound speculation and inquiry was made the necessary subject of a strict and absolute assent. The allegorical, mythological account of sacred things was wholly inverted; liberty of judgment and exposition taken away; no ground left for inquiry, search, or meditation, no refuge from the dogmatical spirit let loose. Every quarter was taken up; every portion prepossessed. All was reduced to article and proposition.[1]

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[1] As above, ch. i. end.

[2] *Supra*, ch. i., and *Advice*, part ii. § 3, in the notes.

Thus a sort of philosophical enthusiasm overspread the world. And bigotry[2] (a species of superstition hardly known before) took place in men's affections, and armed them with a new jealousy against each other. Barbarous terms and idioms were every day introduced, monstrous definitions invented and imposed, new schemes of faith erected from time to time, and hostilities, the fiercest imaginable, exercised on these occasions. So that the enthusiasm or zeal, which was usually shown by mankind in behalf of their particular worships, and which for the most part had been hitherto defensive only, grew now to be universally of the offensive kind.

It may be expected of me perhaps, that being fallen thus from remote antiquity to later periods, I should speak on this occasion with more than ordinary exactness and regularity. It may be urged against me that I talk here as at random and without book; neglecting to produce my authorities or continue my quotations, according to the professed style and manner in which I began this present chapter. But as there are many greater privileges by way of variation, interruption, and digression allowed to us writers of Miscellany, and especially to such as are commentators upon other authors, I shall be content to remain mysterious in this respect, and explain myself no further than by a noted story, which seems to suit our author's purpose, and the present argument.

'Tis observable from Holy Writ, that the ancient Ephesian worshippers, however zealous or enthusiastic they appeared, had only a defensive kind of zeal in behalf of their temple;[1] whenever they thought in earnest, it was brought in danger. In the tumult[2] which happened in that city near the time of the holy apostle's retreat, we have a remarkable instance of what our author calls a religious panic. As little bigots as the people were, and as far from any offensive zeal, yet when their established church came to be called in question, we see in what a manner their zeal began to operate.[3] All with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." At the same time this assembly was so confused, that the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together;[4] and consequently could not understand why their church was in any danger. But the enthusiasm was got up, and a panic fear for the church had struck the multitude. It ran into a popular rage or epidemical frenzy, and was communicated (as our author expresses it[5]) "by aspect, or, as it were, by contact or sympathy."

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[1] *Infra, Misc.* v. ch. iii. in the notes; *et supra,* p. 195.

[2] Let any one who considers distinctly the meaning and force of the word bigotry, endeavour to render it in either of the ancient languages, and he will find how peculiar a passion it implies; and how different from the mere affection of enthusiasm or superstition.

It must be confessed that there was besides these motives a secret spring which forwarded this enthusiasm. For certain parties concerned, men of craft, and strictly united in interest, had been secretly called together, and told, "Gentlemen![6] (or sirs!) Ye know that by this mystery or craft we have our wealth. Ye see withal and have heard that not only here at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, by telling them, they are no real Gods who are figured or wrought with hands, so that not only this our craft is in danger, but also the temple itself."

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[1] The magnificence and beauty of that temple is well known to all who have formed any idea of the ancient Grecian arts and workmanship. It seems to me to be remarkable in our learned and elegant apostle, that though an enemy to this mechanical spirit of religion in the Ephesians, yet according to his known character he accommodates himself to their humour, and the natural turn of their enthusiasm, by writing to his converts in a kind of architect style, and almost with a perpetual allusion to building, and to that majesty, order, and beauty of which their temple was a masterpiece. *ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὔξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.* Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22; and so iii. 17, 18, etc.; and iv. 16, 29.

[2] Act. Apost. xix. 23.

[3] *Ib.* xix. 28, 34.

[4] *Ib.* xix. 32.

[5] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 2.

[6] Act. Apost. xix. 25, etc.

Nothing could be more moderate and wise, nothing more agreeable to that magisterial science or policy which our author recommends,[1] than the behaviour of the town clerk or recorder of the city, as he is represented on this occasion in Holy Writ. I must confess indeed, he went pretty far in the use of this moderating art. He ventured to assure the people, "that every one acquiesced in their ancient worship of the great Goddess, and in their tradition of the image which fell down from Jupiter; that these were facts undeniable, and that the new sect neither meant the pulling down of their church, nor so much as offered to blaspheme or speak amiss of their Goddess."

This, no doubt, was stretching the point sufficiently, as may be understood by the event in after time. One might, perhaps, have suspected this recorder to have been himself a dissenter, or at least an occasional conformist, who could answer so roundly for the new sect, and warrant the church in being secure of damage and out of all danger for the future. Meanwhile the tumult was appeased; no harm befell the temple for that time. The new sect acquiesced in what had been spoken on their behalf. They allowed the apology of the recorder. Accordingly, the zeal of the heathen church, which was only defensive, gave way, and the new religionists were prosecuted no further.

Hitherto, it seems, the face of persecution had not openly shown itself in the wide world. 'Twas sufficient security for every man that he gave no disturbance to what was publicly established. But when offensive zeal came to be discovered in one party, the rest became in a manner necessitated to be aggressors in their turn. They who observed or had once experienced this intolerating spirit could no longer tolerate on their part.[1] And they who had once exerted it over others, could

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[1] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 2.

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[1] Thus the controversy stood before the time of the Emperor Julian, when blood had been so freely drawn and cruelties so frequently exchanged not only between Christian and heathen, but between Christian and Christian, after the most barbarous manner. What the zeal was of many early Christians against the idolatry of the old heathen church (at that time the established one) may be comprehended by any person who is ever so slenderly versed in the history of those times. Nor can it be said indeed of us moderns, that in the quality of good Christians (as that character is generally understood) we are found either backward or scrupulous in assigning to perdition such wretches as we pronounce guilty of idolatry. The name idolater is sufficient excuse for almost any kind of insult against the person, and much more against the worship of such a misbeliever. The very word Christian is in common language used for man, in opposition to brute-beast, without leaving so much as a middle place for the poor heathen or pagan, who, as the greater beast of the two, is naturally doomed to massacre, and his Gods and temples to fracture and demolishment. Nor are we masters of this passion even in our best humour. The French poets, we see, can with great success and general applause exhibit this primitive zeal even on the public stage: *Polyeucte*, Act ii. Sc. 6:—

> Ne perdons plus de temps, le sacrifice est prêt,
> Allons-y du vrai Dieu soutenir l'intérêt ;
> Allons fouler aux pieds ce foudre ridicule
> Dont arme un bois pourri ce peuple trop crédule ;
> Allons en éclairer l'aveuglement fatal,
> Allons briser ces Dieux de pierre et de métal ;
> Abandonnons nos jours à cette ardeur céleste,
> Faisons triompher Dieu ; qu'il dispose du reste.

I should scarce have mentioned this, but that it came into my mind how ill a construction some people have endeavoured to make of what our author, stating the case of heathen and Christian persecution in his *Letter of Enthusiasm*, has said concerning the Emperor Julian. It was no more indeed than had been said of that virtuous and gallant Emperor by his greatest enemies, even by those who (to the shame of Christianity) boasted of his having been most insolently affronted on all occasions, and even treacherously assassinated by one of his Christian soldiers. As for such expect no better quarter for themselves. So that nothing less than mutual extirpation became the aim and almost open profession of each religious society.

authors as these, should I cite them in their proper invective style and saint-like phrase, they would make no very agreeable appearance, especially in Miscellanies of the kind we have here undertaken. But a letter of that elegant and witty Emperor may not be improperly placed amongst our citations as a pattern of his humour and genius, as well as of his principle and sentiments on this occasion. Julian's *Epistles*, No. 52.

JULIAN TO THE BOSTRENS

"I should have thought, indeed, that the Galilæan leaders would have esteemed themselves more indebted to me than to him who preceded me in the administration of the Empire. For in his time many of them suffered exile, persecution, and imprisonment. Multitudes of those whom in their religion they term heretics were put to the sword; insomuch that in Samosata, Cyzicum, Paphlagonia, Bithynia, Galatia, and many other countries, whole towns were levelled with the earth. The just reverse of this has been observed in my time. The exiles have been recalled, and the proscribed restored to the lawful possession of their estates. But to that height of fury and distraction are this people arrived, that being no longer allowed the privilege to tyrannise over one another, or persecute either their own sectaries, or the religious of the lawful church, they swell with rage, and leave no stone unturned, no opportunity unemployed of raising tumult and sedition; so little regard have they to true piety, so little obedience to our laws and constitutions, however humane and tolerating. For still do we determine and steadily resolve never to suffer one of them to be drawn involuntarily to our altars. . . . As for the mere people, indeed, they appear driven to these riots and seditions by those amongst them whom they call clerics, who are now enraged to find themselves restrained in the use of their former power and intemperate rule. . . . They can no longer act the magistrate or civil judge, nor assume authority to make people's wills, supplant relations, possess themselves of other men's patrimonies, and by specious pretences transfer all into their own possession. . . . For this reason I have thought fit by this public Edict to forewarn the people of this sort, that they raise no more commotions, nor gather in a riotous manner about their seditious clerics, in defiance of the magistrate, who has been insulted and in danger of being stoned by these incited rabbles. In their congregations they may, notwithstanding, assemble as they please, and crowd about their leaders, performing worship, receiving doctrine, and praying, according as they

In this extremity, it might well perhaps have been esteemed the happiest wish for mankind, that one of these contending parties of incompatible religionists should at last prevail over the rest, so as by an universal and absolute power to determine orthodoxy,[1] and make that opinion effectually catholic which in their particular judgment had the best right to that denomination. And thus by force of massacre and desolation, peace in worship, and civil unity by help of the spiritual, might be presumed in a fair way of being restored to mankind.

I shall conclude with observing how ably the Roman-Christian and once catholic church, by the assistance of their converted emperors,[2] proceeded in the establishment of their growing hierarchy. They considered wisely the various superstitions and enthusiasms of mankind, and proved the different kinds and force of each. All these seeming contrarieties of human passion they knew how to comprehend in their political

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are by them taught and conducted; but if with any tendency to sedition, let them beware how they hearken or give assent, and remember 'tis at their peril if by these means they are secretly wrought up to mutiny and insurrection. . . . Live therefore in peace and quietness, neither spitefully opposing or injuriously treating one another. You misguided people of the new way, beware, on your side; and you of the ancient and established church, injure not your neighbours and fellow-citizens, who are enthusiastically led away in ignorance and mistake rather than with design or malice! 'Tis by discourse and reason, not by blows, insults, or violence that men are to be informed of truth and convinced of error. Again therefore and again I enjoin and charge the zealous followers of the true religion, no way to injure, molest, or affront the Galilæan people." Thus the generous and mild Emperor, whom we may indeed call heathen, but not so justly apostate, since being at different times of his youth transferred to different schools or universities, and bred under tutors of each religion, as well heathen as Christian, he happened, when of full age, to make his choice (though very unfortunately) in the former kind and adhered to the ancient religion of his country and forefathers. See the same Emperor's letters to Artabius, No. 7, and to Hecebolus, No. 43, and to the people of Alexandria, No. 10. See Treatise i. § 3.

[1] *Infra,* at the end.

[2] *Wit and Humour,* part iv. § 1, end; *supra, Misc.* ii. ch. ii.

model and subservient system of divinity. They knew how to make advantage both from the high speculations of philosophy and the grossest ideas of vulgar ignorance. They saw there was nothing more different than that enthusiasm which ran upon spirituals, according to the simpler views of the divine existence,[1] and that which ran upon external proportions,[2] magnificence of structures, ceremonies, processions, choirs, and those other harmonies which captivate the eye and ear. On this account they even added to this latter kind, and displayed religion in a yet more gorgeous habit of temples, statues, paintings, vestments, copes, mitres, purple, and the cathedral pomp. With these arms they could subdue the victorious Goths, and secure themselves an Attila when their Cæsars failed them.[3]

The truth is, 'tis but a vulgar species of enthusiasm which is moved chiefly by show and ceremony and wrought upon by chalices and candles, robes and figured dances. Yet this, we may believe, was looked upon as no slight ingredient of devotion in those days, since at this hour the manner is found to be of considerable efficacy with some of the devout amongst ourselves, who pass the least for superstitious, and are reckoned in the number of the polite world. This the wise hierarchy duly preponderating,[4] but being satisfied withal that there were other tempers and hearts which could not so easily be captivated by this exterior allurement, they assigned another part of religion to proselytes of another character and complexion, who were allowed to proceed on a quite different bottom, by the inward way of contemplation and divine love.

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[1] *Moralists*, part ii. § 3.

[2] *Supra*, *Misc.* i. ch. ii.

[3] When this victorious ravager was in full march to Rome, St. Leon (the then pope) went out to meet him in solemn pomp. The Goth was struck with the appearance, obeyed the priest, and retired instantly with his whole army in a panic fear, alleging that among the rest of the pontifical train he had seen one of an extraordinary form who threatened him with death if he did not instantly retire. Of this important encounter there are in St. Peter's Church, in the Vatican, and elsewhere at Rome, many fine sculptures, paintings, and representations, deservingly made in honour of the miracle.

[4] [*I.e.* considering.]

They are indeed so far from being jealous of mere enthusiasm or the ecstatic manner of devotion, that they allow their mystics to write and preach in the most rapturous and seraphic strains. They suffer them in a manner to supersede all external worship and triumph over outward forms, till the refined religionists proceed so far as either expressly or seemingly to dissuade the practice of the vulgar and established ceremonial duties. And then, indeed,[1] they check the supposed exorbitant enthusiasm, which would prove dangerous to their hierarchal state.

If modern visions, prophecies, and dreams, charms, miracles, exorcisms, and the rest of this kind be comprehended in that which we call fanaticism or superstition, to this spirit they allow a full career; whilst to ingenuous writers they afford the liberty, on the other side, in a civil manner, to call in question these spiritual feats performed in monasteries, or up and down by their mendicant or itinerant priests and ghostly missionaries.

This is that ancient hierarchy which, in respect of its first foundation, its policy, and the consistency of its whole frame and constitution, cannot but appear in some respect august and venerable, even in such as we do not usually esteem weak eyes. These are the spiritual conquerors, who, like the first Cæsars, from small beginnings established the foundations of an almost universal monarchy. No wonder if at this day the immediate view of this hierarchal residence, the city and court of Rome, be found to have an extraordinary effect on foreigners of other latter churches. No wonder if the amazed surveyors are for the future so apt either to conceive the horridest aversion to all priestly government, or, on the contrary, to admire it so far as even to wish a coalescence or reunion with this ancient mother church.

In reality, the exercise of power, however arbitrary or despotic, seems less intolerable under such a spiritual sovereignty, so extensive, ancient, and of such a long succession, than under the petty tyrannies and mimical polities of some new pretenders. The former may even persecute with a tolerable grace;[1] the latter, who would willingly derive their authority from the former, and graft on their successive right, must necessarily make a very awkward figure. And whilst they strive to give themselves the same air of independency on the civil magistrate, whilst they affect the same authority in government, the same grandeur, magnificence, and pomp in worship, they raise the highest ridicule in the eyes of those who have real discernment, and can distinguish originals from copies:—

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[1] Witness the case of Molinos, and of the pious, worthy, and ingenious Abbé Fénelon, now Archbishop of Cambray.

> O imitatores, servum pecus![2]

CHAPTER III

Of the force of humour in religion—Support of our author's argument in his essay on the freedom of wit and raillery—Zeal discussed. Spiritual surgeons; executioners; carvers—Original of human sacrifice—Exhilaration of religion—Various aspects from outward causes.

The celebrated wits of the miscellanarian race, the essay writers, casual discoursers, reflection coiners, meditation founders, and others of the irregular kind of writers, may plead it as their peculiar advantage "that they follow the variety of Nature." And in such a climate as ours their plea, no doubt, may be very just. We islanders, famed for other mutabilities, are particularly noted for the variableness and inconstancy of our weather. And if our taste in Letters be found answerable to this temperature of our climate, 'tis certain a writer must, in our account, be the more valuable in his kind, as he can agreeably surprise his reader by sudden changes and transports from one extreme to another.

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[1] *Infra*, p. 224.

[2] Hor. *Ep.* I. xix. 19.

Were it not for the known prevalency of this relish, and the apparent deference paid those geniuses who are said to elevate and surprise, the author of these Miscellanies might, in all probability, be afraid to entertain his reader with this multifarious, complex, and desultory kind of reading. 'Tis certain, that if we consider the beginning and process of our present work, we shall find sufficient variation in it. From a professed levity we are lapsed into a sort of gravity unsuitable to our manner of setting out. We have steered an adventurous course, and seem newly come out of a stormy and rough sea. 'Tis time indeed we should enjoy a calm, and instead of expanding our sails before the swelling gusts, it befits us to retire under the lee-shore and ply our oars in a smooth water.

'Tis the philosopher, the orator, or the poet whom we may compare to some first-rate vessel which launches out into the wide sea, and with a proud motion insults the encountering surges. We essay-writers are of the small craft or galley kind. We move chiefly by starts and bounds, according as our motion is by frequent intervals renewed. We have no great adventure in view, nor can tell certainly whither we are bound. We undertake no mighty voyage by help of stars or compass, but row from creek to creek, keep up a coasting trade, and are fitted only for fair weather and the summer season.

Happy therefore it is for us in particular, that having finished our course of Enthusiasm, and pursued our author into his second treatise,[1] we are now at last obliged to turn towards pleasanter reflections, and have such subjects in view as must naturally reduce us to a more familiar style. Wit and humour (the professed subject of the treatise now before us) will hardly bear to be examined in ponderous sentences and poised discourse. We might now perhaps do best to lay aside the gravity of strict argument and resume the way of chat, which, through aversion to a contrary formal manner, is generally relished with more than ordinary satisfaction. For excess of physic, we know, has often made men hate the name of wholesome. And an abundancy of forced instruction and solemn counsel may have made men full as averse to any thing delivered with an air of high wisdom and science, especially if it be so high as to be set above all human art of reasoning, and even above reason itself, in the account of its sublime dispensers.

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[1] Viz. *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour.*

However, since it may be objected to us by certain formalists of this sort "that we can prove nothing duly without proving it in form," we may for once condescend to their demand, state our case formally, and divide our subject into parts, after the precise manner and according to just rule and method.

Our purpose, therefore, being to defend an author who has been charged as too presumptuous for introducing the way of wit and humour into religious searches, we shall endeavour to make appear:—

1st. That wit and humour are corroborative of religion, and promotive of true faith.

2nd. That they are used as proper means of this kind by the holy founders of religion.

3rd. That notwithstanding the dark complexion and sour humour of some religious teachers, we may be justly said to have in the main a witty and good-humoured religion.

Among the earliest acquaintance of my youth, I remember, in particular, a club of three or four merry gentlemen, who had long kept company with one another, and were seldom separate in any party of pleasure or diversion. They happened once to be upon a travelling adventure, and came to a country where they were told for certain they should find the worst entertainment, as well as the worst roads imaginable. One of the gentlemen, who seemed the least concerned for this disaster, said slightly and without any seeming design, "that the best expedient for them in this extremity would be to keep themselves in high humour, and endeavour to commend everything which the place afforded." The other gentlemen immediately took the hint, but, as it happened, kept silence, passed the subject over and took no further notice of what had been proposed.

Being entered into the dismal country, in which they proceeded without the least complaint, 'twas remarkable, that if by great chance they came to any tolerable bit of road or any ordinary prospect, they failed not to say something or other in its praise, and would light often on such pleasant fancies and representations, as made the objects in reality agreeable.

When the greatest part of the day was thus spent, and our gentlemen arrived where they intended to take their quarters, the first of them who made trial of the fare, or tasted either glass or dish, recommended it with such an air of assurance and in such lively expressions of approbation, that the others came instantly over to his opinion, and confirmed his relish with many additional encomiums of their own.

Many ingenious reasons were given for the several odd tastes and looks of things which were presented to them at table. "Some meats were wholesome, others of a high taste, others according to the manner of eating in this or that foreign country." Every dish had the flavour of some celebrated receipt in cookery; and the wine and other liquors had, in their turn, the advantage of being treated in the same elegant strain. In short, our gentlemen ate and drank heartily, and took up with their indifferent fare so well, that 'twas apparent they had wrought upon themselves to believe they were tolerably well served.

Their servants, in the meantime, having laid no such plot as this against themselves, kept to their senses, and stood it out, "that their masters had certainly lost theirs. For how else could they swallow so contentedly and take all for good which was set before them?"

Had I to deal with a malicious reader, he might perhaps pretend to infer from this story of my travelling friends, that I intended to represent it as an easy matter for people to persuade themselves into what opinion or belief they pleased. But it can never surely be thought that men of true judgment and understanding should set about such a task as that of perverting their own judgment and giving a wrong bias to their reason. They must easily foresee that an attempt of this kind, should it have the least success, would prove of far worse consequence to them than any perversion of their taste, appetite, or ordinary senses.

I must confess it, however, to be my imagination that where fit circumstances concur, and many inviting occasions offer from the side of men's interest, their humour, or their passion, 'tis no extraordinary case to see them enter into such a plot as this against their own understandings, and endeavour by all possible means to persuade both themselves and others of what they think convenient and useful to believe.

If in many particular cases, where favour and affection prevail, it be found so easy a thing with us to impose upon ourselves; it cannot surely be very hard to do it where, we take for granted, our highest interest is concerned. Now it is certainly no small interest or concern with men to believe what is by authority established, since in the case of disbelief there can be no choice left but either to live a hypocrite or be esteemed profane. Even where men are left to themselves, and allowed the freedom of their choice, they are still forward enough in believing, and can officiously endeavour to persuade themselves of the truth of any flattering imposture.

Nor is it unusual to find men successful in this endeavour; as, among other instances, may appear by the many religious faiths or opinions, however preposterous or contradictory, which, age after age, we know to have been raised on the foundation of miracles and pretended commissions from heaven. These have been as generally espoused and passionately cherished as the greatest truths and most certain revelations. 'Tis hardly to be supposed that such combinations should be formed, and forgeries erected with such success and prevalency over the understandings of men, did not they themselves co-operate, of their own accord, towards the imposture, and show "that by a good-will and hearty desire of believing, they had in reality a considerable hand in the deceit."

'Tis certain that in a country where faith has for a long time gone by inheritance, and opinions are entailed by law, there is little room left for the vulgar to alter their persuasion, or deliberate on the choice of their religious belief. Whensoever a government thinks fit to concern itself with men's opinions, and by its absolute authority impose any particular belief, there is none perhaps ever so ridiculous or monstrous in which it needs doubt of having good success. This we may see thoroughly effected in certain countries by a steady policy and sound application of punishment and reward, with the assistance of particular courts erected to this end, peculiar methods of justice, peculiar magistrates and officers, proper inquests and certain wholesome severities, not slightly administered and played with (as certain triflers propose), but duly and properly enforced, as is absolutely requisite to this end of strict conformity, and unity in one and the same profession and manner of worship.

But should it happen to be the truth itself which was thus effectually propagated by the means we have described, the very nature of such means can, however, allow but little honour to the propagators, and little merit to the disciples and believers. 'Tis certain that Mahometism, Paganism, Judaism or any other belief may stand as well as the truest upon this foundation. He who is now an orthodox Christian, would by virtue of such a discipline have been infallibly as true a Mussulman or as errant a heretic, had his birth happened in another place.

For this reason there can be no rational belief but where comparison is allowed, examination permitted, and a sincere toleration established. And in this case, I will presume to say, "that whatever belief is once espoused or countenanced by the magistrate, it will have a sufficient advantage, without any help from force or menaces on one hand, or extraordinary favour and partial treatment on the other." If the belief be in any measure consonant to truth and reason, it will find as much favour in the eyes of mankind as truth and reason need desire. Whatever difficulties there may be in any particular speculations or mysteries belonging to it, the better sort of men will endeavour to pass them over. They will believe (as our author[1] says) to the full stretch of their reason, and add spurs to their faith, in order to be the more sociable, and conform the better with what their interest, in conjunction with their good-humour, inclines them to receive as credible, and observe as their religious duty and devotional task.

Here it is that good-humour will naturally take place, and the hospitable disposition of our travelling friends above recited will easily transfer itself into religion, and operate in the same manner with respect to the established faith (however miraculous or incomprehensible) under a tolerating, mild, and gentle government.

Every one knows, indeed, that by heresy is understood a stubbornness in the will, not a defect merely in the understanding. On this account 'tis impossible that an honest and good-humoured man should be a schismatic or heretic, and affect to separate from his national worship on slight reasons or without severe provocation.

To be pursued by petty inquisitors; to be threatened with punishment or penal laws; to be marked out as dangerous and suspected; to be railed at in high places with all the studied wit and art of calumny, are indeed sufficient provocations to ill-humour, and may force people to divide who at first had never any such intention. But the virtue of good-humour in religion is such that it can even reconcile persons to a belief in which they were never bred, or to which they had conceived a former prejudice.

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[1] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 4.

From these considerations we cannot but of course conclude, "That there is nothing so ridiculous in respect of policy, or so wrong and odious in respect of common humanity, as a moderate and half-way persecution." It only frets the sore; it raises the ill-humour of mankind; excites the keener spirits; moves indignation in beholders; and sows the very seeds of schism in men's bosoms. A resolute and bold-faced persecution leaves no time or scope for these engendering distempers or gathering ill-humours. It does the work at once, by extirpation, banishment, or massacre; and, like a bold stroke in surgery, dispatches by one short amputation what a bungling hand would make worse and worse, to the perpetual sufferance and misery of the patient.

If there be on earth a proper way to render the most sacred truth suspected, 'tis by supporting it with threats, and pretending to terrify people into the belief of it. This is a sort of daring mankind in a cause where they know themselves superior, and out of reach. The weakest mortal finds within himself that though he may be outwitted and deluded, he can never be forced in what relates to his opinion or assent. And there are few men so ignorant of human nature, and of what they hold in common with their kind, as not to comprehend "that where great vehemence is expressed by any one in what relates solely to another, 'tis seldom without some private interest of his own."

In common matters of dispute, the angry disputant makes the best cause to appear the worst. A clown once took a fancy to hear the Latin disputes of doctors at a university. He was asked what pleasure he could take in viewing such combatants, when he could never know so much as which of the parties had the better. "For that matter," replied the clown, "I a'n't such a fool neither, but I can see who's the first that puts t'other into a passion." Nature herself dictated this lesson to the clown, that he who had the better of the argument, would be easy and well-humoured; but he who was unable to support his cause by reason, would naturally lose his temper and grow violent.

Were two travellers agreed to tell their story separate in public, the one being a man of sincerity, but positive and dogmatical; the other less sincere, but easy and good-humoured; though it happened that the accounts of this latter gentleman were of the more miraculous sort, they would yet sooner gain belief, and be more favourably received by mankind, than the strongly asserted relations and vehement narratives of the other fierce defender of the truth.

That good-humour is a chief cause of compliance or acquiescence in matters of faith, may be proved from the very spirit of those whom we commonly call critics. 'Tis a known prevention against the gentlemen of this character, "that they are generally ill-humoured and splenetic." The world will needs have it that their spleen disturbs [them. And I must confess I think the world in general to be so far right in this conceit, that though all critics perhaps are not necessarily splenetic, all splenetic people (whether naturally such, or made so by ill-usage) have a necessary propensity to criticism and satire. When men are easy in themselves they let others remain so, and can readily comply with what seems plausible, and is thought conducing to the quiet or good correspondence of mankind. They study to raise no difficulties or doubts. And in religious affairs 'tis seldom that they are known forward to entertain ill thoughts or surmises, whilst they are unmolested. But if disturbed by groundless arraignments and suspicions, by unnecessary invectives and bitter declamations, and by a contentious quarrelsome aspect of religion, they naturally turn critics, and begin to question everything. The spirit of satire rises with the ill mood; and the chief passion of men thus diseased and thrown out of good humour is to find fault, censure, unravel, confound, and leave nothing without exception and controversy.

These are the sceptics or scrupulists, against whom there is such a clamour raised. 'Tis evident in the meanwhile that the very clamour itself, joined with the usual menaces and show of force, is that which chiefly raises this sceptical spirit, and helps to multiply the number of these inquisitive and ill-humoured critics. Mere threats, without power of execution, are only exasperating and provocative. They[1] who are masters of the carnal as well as spiritual weapon may apply each at their pleasure, and in what proportion they think necessary. But where the magistrate resolves steadily to reserve his fasces for his own proper province, and keep the edge-tools and deadly instruments out of other hands, 'tis in vain for spiritual pretenders to take such magisterial airs. It can then only become them to brandish such arms when they have strength enough to make the magistrate resign his office, and become provost or executioner in their service.

Should any one who happens to read these lines perceive in himself a rising animosity against the author for asserting thus zealously the notion of a religious liberty and mutual toleration, 'tis wished that he would maturely deliberate on the cause of his disturbance and ill-humour. Would he deign to look narrowly into himself, he would undoubtedly find that it is not zeal for religion or the truth which moves him on this occasion. For had he happened to be in a nation where he was no conformist, nor had any hope or expectation of obtaining the precedency for his own manner of worship, he would have found nothing preposterous in this our doctrine of indulgence. 'Tis a fact indisputable, that whatever sect or religion is undermost, though it may have persecuted at any time before, yet as soon as it begins to suffer persecution in its turn it recurs instantly to the principles of moderation, and maintains this our plea for complacency, sociableness, and good humour in religion. The mystery therefore of this animosity or rising indignation of my devout and zealous reader is only this: "That being devoted to the interest of a party already in possession or expectation of the temporal advantages annexed to a particular belief, he fails not, as a zealous party-man, to look with jealousy on every unconformable opinion, and is sure to justify those means which he thinks proper to prevent its growth." He knows that if in matters of religion any one believes amiss, 'tis at his own peril. If opinion damns, vice certainly does as much. Yet will our gentleman easily find, if he inquires the least into himself, that he has no such furious concern for the security of men's morals, nor any such violent resentment of their vices, when they are such as noway incommode him. And from hence it will be easy for him to infer "that the passion he feels on this occasion is not from pure zeal, but private interest and worldly emulation."

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[1] *Supra, Misc.* ii. ch. ii., end.

Come we now (as authentic rhetoricians express themselves) to our second head, which we should again subdivide into firsts and seconds but that this manner of carving is of late days grown much out of fashion.

'Twas the custom of our ancestors, perhaps as long since as the days of our hospitable King Arthur, to have nothing served at table but what was entire and substantial. 'Twas a whole boar or solid ox which made the feast. The figure of the animal was preserved entire, and the dissection made in form by the appointed carver, a man of might as well as profound craft and notable dexterity, who was seen erect, with goodly mien and action, displaying heads and members, dividing according to art, and distributing his subject matter into proper parts, suitable to the stomachs of those he served. In latter days 'tis become the fashion to eat with less ceremony and method. Every one chooses to carve for himself. The learned manner of dissection is out of request; and a certain method of cookery has been introduced, by which the anatomical science of the table is entirely set aside. Ragouts and fricassees are the reigning dishes, in which everything is so dismembered and thrown out of all order and form that no part of the mass can properly be divided, or distinguished from another.

Fashion is indeed a powerful mistress, and by her single authority has so far degraded the carving method and use of solids, even in discourse and writing, that our religious pastors themselves have many of them changed their manner of distributing to us their spiritual food. They have quitted their substantial service and uniform division into parts and underparts, and in order to become fashionable, they have run into the more savoury way of learned ragout and medley. 'Tis the unbred rustic orator alone who presents his clownish audience with a divisible discourse. The elegant court divine exhorts in miscellany, and is ashamed to bring his twos and threes before a fashionable assembly.

Should I therefore, as a mere miscellanarian or essay writer, forgetting what I had premised, be found to drop a head and lose the connecting thread of my present discourse, the case perhaps would not be so preposterous. For fear, however, lest I should be charged for being worse than my word, I shall endeavour to satisfy my reader by pursuing my method proposed, if peradventure he can call to mind what that method was. Or if he cannot, the matter is not so very important but he may safely pursue his reading without further trouble.

To proceed, therefore. Whatever means or methods may be employed at any time in maintaining or propagating a religious belief already current and established, 'tis evident that the first beginnings must have been founded in that natural complacency and good humour which inclines to trust and confidence in mankind. Terrors alone, though accompanied with miracles and prodigies of whatever kind, are not capable of raising that sincere faith and absolute reliance which is required in favour of the divinely authorised instructor and spiritual chief. The affection and love which procures a true adherence to the new religious foundation must depend either on a real or counterfeit goodness[1] in the religious founder. Whatever ambitious spirit may inspire him, whatever savage zeal or persecuting principle may lie in reserve ready to disclose itself when authority and power is once obtained, the first scene of doctrine, however, fails not to present us with the agreeable views of joy, love, meekness, gentleness, and moderation.

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[1] *Wit and Humour*, part ii. § 2; *Moralists*, part ii. § 5.

In this respect religion, according to the common practice in many sects, may be compared to that sort of courtship of which the fair sex are known often to complain. In the beginning of an amour, when these innocent charmers are first accosted, they hear of nothing but tender vows, submission, service, love. But soon afterwards, when won by this appearance of gentleness and humility, they have resigned themselves, and are no longer their own, they hear a different note, and are taught to understand submission and service in a sense they little expected. Charity and brotherly love are very engaging sounds; but who would dream that out of abundant charity and brotherly love should come steel, fire, gibbets, rods, and such a sound and hearty application of these remedies as should at once advance the worldly greatness of religious pastors and the particular interest of private souls, for which they are so charitably concerned?

It has been observed by our author[1] "that the Jews were naturally a very cloudy people." That they had certainly in religion, as in everything else, the least good-humour of any people in the world is very apparent. Had it been otherwise, their holy legislator and deliverer, who was declared the meekest man on earth,[2] and who for many years together had by the most popular and kind acts endeavoured to gain their love and affection, would in all probability have treated them afterwards with more sweetness, and been able with less blood and massacre[3] to retain them in their religious duty. This, however, we may observe, that if the first Jewish princes and celebrated kings acted in reality according to the institutions of their great founder, not only music but even play and dance were of holy appointment and divine right. The first monarch of this nation, though of a melancholy complexion, joined music with his spiritual exercises, and even used it as a remedy under that dark enthusiasm or evil spirit,[1] which how far it might resemble that of prophecy, experienced by him[2] even after his apostasy, our author[3] pretends not to determine. 'Tis certain that the successor of this prince was a hearty espouser of the merry devotion, and by his example has shown it to have been fundamental in the religious constitution of his people. The famous entry or high dance[4] performed by him, after so conspicuous a manner, in the procession of the sacred coffer, shows that he was not ashamed of expressing any ecstasy of joy or playsome humour[5] which was practised by the meanest of the priests or people on such an occasion.[6]

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[1] *Letter of Enthusiasm,* § 2; and above, *Misc.* ii. ch. i.

[2] Num. xii. 3.

[3] Exod. xxxii. 27, etc.; and Num. xvi. 41.

Besides the many songs and hymns dispersed in Holy Writ, the Book of Psalms itself, Job, Proverbs, Canticles, and other entire volumes of the sacred collection, which are plainly poetry and full of humorous images and jocular wit, may sufficiently show how readily the inspired authors had recourse to humour and diversion as a proper means to promote religion and strengthen the established faith.

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[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 10; and xix. 9.

[2] *Ib.* 23, 24.

[3] *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 6.

[4] 1 Sam. vi. 5, 14, 16.

[5] *Ib.* 22.

[6] Though this dance was not performed quite naked, the dancers, it seems, were so slightly clothed that, in respect of modesty, they might as well have worn nothing, their nakedness appearing still by means of their high caperings, leaps, and violent attitudes which were proper to this dance. The reader, if he be curious, may examine what relation this religious ecstasy and naked dance had to the naked and processional prophecy (1 Sam. xix. 23, 24), where prince, priest, and people prophesied in conjunction, the prince himself being both of the itinerant and naked party. It appears that even before he was yet advanced to the throne he had been seized with this prophesying spirit, errant, processional, and saltant, attended, as we find, with a sort of martial dance performed in troops or companies, with pipe and tabret accompanying the march, together with psaltry, harp, cornets, timbrels, and other variety of music. See 1 Sam. x. 5; xix. 23, etc.; 2 Sam. vi. 5; and above, *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 6.

When the affairs of the Jewish nation grew desperate, and everything seemed tending to a total conquest and captivity, the style of their holy writers and prophets might well vary from that of earlier days in the rise and vigour of their commonwealth, or during the first splendour of their monarchy, when the princes themselves prophesied and potent kings were of the number of the sacred penmen. This still we may be assured of, that however melancholy or ill-humoured any of the prophets may appear at any time, 'twas not that kind of spirit which God was wont to encourage in them. Witness the case of the prophet Jonah, whose character is so naturally described in Holy Writ.

Pettish as this prophet was, unlike a man, and resembling rather some refractory boyish pupil, it may be said that God, as a kind tutor, was pleased to humour him, bear with his anger, and in a lusory manner expose his childish frowardness and show him to himself.

"Arise (said his gracious Lord), and go to Nineveh."[1] "No such matter," says our prophet to himself, but away over sea for Tarshish. He fairly plays the truant, like an arch schoolboy, hoping to hide out of the way. But his Tutor had good eyes and a long reach. He overtook him at sea, where a storm was ready prepared for his exercise, and a fish's belly for his lodging. The renegade found himself in harder durance than any at land. He was sufficiently mortified. He grew good, prayed, moralised, and spoke mightily against lying vanities.[2]

Again the prophet is taken into favour,[3] and bid go to Nineveh to foretell destruction. He foretells it. Nineveh repents; God pardons, and the prophet is angry.

"Lord! did I not foresee what this would come to? Was not this my saying when I was safe and quiet at home? What else should I have run away for? As if I knew not how little dependence there was on the resolution of those who are always so ready to forgive and repent of what they have determined. No! Strike me dead! Take my life this moment. 'Tis better for me. If ever I prophesy again——"[1]

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[1] Jonah i. etc. [2] *Ib.* ii. 8. [3] *Ib.* iii. 1, etc.

"And dost thou well then to be thus angry, Jonah? Consider with thyself. Come! Since thou wilt needs retire out of the city to see at a distance what will come of it, here, take a better fence than thy own booth against the hot sun which incommodes thee. Take this tall plant as a shady covering for thy head. Cool thyself, and be delivered from thy grief."[2]

When the Almighty had shown this indulgence to the prophet he grew better-humoured, and passed a tolerable night. But the next morning the worm came and an east wind; the arbour was nipped, the sun shone vehemently, and the prophet's head was heated as before. Presently the ill mood returns, and the prophet is at the old pass. "Better die than live at this rate. Death—death alone can satisfy me. Let me hear no longer of living. No! 'Tis in vain to talk of it."[3]

Again God expostulates; but is taken up short, and answered churlishly by the testy prophet. "Angry he is, angry he ought to be, and angry he will be to his death."[4] But the Almighty, with the utmost pity towards him in this melancholy and froward temper, lays open the folly of it, and exhorts to mildness and good humour in the most tender manner and under the most familiar and pleasant images; whilst he shows expressly more regard and tenderness to the very cattle and brute-beasts than the prophet to his own human kind, and to those very disciples whom by his preaching he had converted.[5]

In the ancienter parts of sacred story, where the beginning of things and origin of human race are represented to us, there are sufficient instances of this familiarity of style, this popular pleasant intercourse and manner of dialogue between God and man;[1] I might add, even between man and beast;[2] and what is still more extraordinary, between God and Satan.[3]

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[1] Jonah iv. 1, 2, 3.

[2] *Ib.* 4, 5, 6.

[3] *Ib.* 7, 8.

[4] *Ib.* 9.

[5] See the last verse of this prophet.

Whatsoever of this kind may be allegorically understood, or in the way of parable or fable, this I am sure of, that the accounts, descriptions, narrations, expressions, and phrases are in themselves many times exceedingly pleasant, entertaining, and facetious. But fearing lest I might be misinterpreted should I offer to set these passages in their proper light, which, however, has been performed by undoubted good Christians and most learned and eminent divines of our own church,[4] I forbear to go any further into the examination or criticism of this sort.

As for our Saviour's style, 'tis not more vehement and majestic in his gravest animadversions or declamatory discourses than it is sharp, humorous, and witty in his repartees, reflections, fabulous narrations, or parables, similes, comparisons, and other methods of milder censure and reproof, his exhortations to his disciples, his particular designation of their manners, the pleasant images under which he often couches his morals and prudential rules; even his miracles themselves (especially the first he ever wrought[5]) carry with them a certain festivity, alacrity, and good humour so remarkable that I should look upon it as impossible not to be moved in a pleasant manner at their recital.

Now, if what I have here asserted in behalf of pleasantry and humour be found just and real in respect of the Jewish and Christian religions, I doubt not it will be yielded to me, in respect of the ancient heathen establishments, that the highest care was taken by their original founders and following reformers to exhilarate religion, and correct that melancholy and gloominess to which it is subject, according to those different modifications of enthusiasm above specified.[6]

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[1] Gen. iii. 9, etc.

[2] Num. xxii. 28, etc.

[3] (1) Job i., ii.; (2) 2 Chron. xviii. 18, etc.

[4] See Burnet, *Archæol.* cap. 7, p. 280, etc.

[5] St. John ii. 11.

[6] Above, ch. i., ii.

Our author, as I take it, has elsewhere[1] shown that these founders were real musicians and improvers of poetry, music, and the entertaining arts, which they in a manner incorporated with religion; not without good reason, as I am apt to imagine. For to me it plainly appears, that in the early times of all religions, when nations were yet barbarous and savage, there was ever an aptness or tendency towards the dark part of superstition, which among many other horrors produced that of human sacrifice. Something of this nature might possibly be deduced even from Holy Writ.[2] And in other histories we are informed of it more at large.

Every one knows how great a part of the old heathen worship consisted in play, poetry, and dance. And though some of the more melancholy and superstitious votaries might approach the shrines of their divinities with mean grimaces, crouchings, and other fawning actions betraying the low thoughts they had of the divine nature; yet 'tis well known that in those times the illiberal sycophantic[3] manner of devotion was by the wiser sort contemned and oft suspected as knavish and indirect.[1]

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[1] *Advice to an Author*, part ii. § 2.

[2] Gen. xxii. 1, 2, etc.; and Judges xi. 30, 31, etc.

These places relating to Abraham and Jephthah are cited only with respect to the notion which these primitive warriors may be said to have entertained concerning this horrid enormity, so common among the inhabitants of Palestine and other neighbouring nations. It appears that even the elder of these Hebrew princes was under no extreme surprise on this trying revelation. Nor did he think of expostulating in the least on this occasion, when at another time he could be so importunate for the pardon of an inhospitable, murderous, impious, and incestuous city, Gen. xviii. 23, etc. See Marsham's *Citations*, pp. 76, 77: "ex istis satius est colligere hanc Abrahami tentationem non fuisse *κεκαινουργημένην πράξιν*, actionem innovatam; non recens excogitatam, sed ad pristinos Cananaeorum mores designatam." See the learned Capel's *Dissertation upon Jephthah*, "ex hujus voti lege (Lev. xxvii. 28, 29) Jephte filiam omnino videtur immolasse, hoc est, morte affecisse, et executus est in ea votum quod ipse voverat, Jud. xi. 39."

[3] See *Letter of Enthusiasm*, § 4.

How different an air and aspect the good and virtuous were presumed to carry with them to the temple, let Plutarch singly, instead of many others, witness in his excellent treatise[2] of superstition, and in another against the Epicurean atheism,

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[1] . . . Non tu prece poscis emaci, etc.
Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque susurros
Tollere de templis. . . .
De Jove quid sentis? Estne, ut praeponere cures
Hunc cuinam? . . .
. . . Qua tu mercede deorum
Emeris auriculas? . . .
O curvae in terris animae et coelestium inanes!
Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros immittere mores,
Et bona diis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa?

["You are not the man to make higgling prayers. . . . It is not everyone who is ready to do away with muttering and whispering from our temples. . . . What is your view of Jupiter? May I assume that you would think of putting him above—'above whom?' . . . What is the price you pay for the ears of the Gods? . . . O ye souls that cleave to earth and have nothing heavenly in you! How can it answer to introduce the spirit of the age into the temple-service, and infer what the Gods like from this sinful pampered flesh of ours?"—From Persius, *Sat.* 2; Conington's translation.]

Non est meum, si mugiat Africis
Malus procellis, ad miseras preces
Decurrere. . . .

["It is not for me to betake myself to pitiful entreaties if my mast roar with the south-west wind."—Horace, *Od.* III. xxix. 57-59.]

See *Wit and Humour*, part iii. § 1; and above, p. 205, in the notes.

[2] *ὦ βάρβαρ' ἐξευρόντες* "Ελληνες *κατὰ τῇ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ, πηλώσεις, καταβαρβαρώσεις, σαββατισμούς, ῥίψεις ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αἰσχράς, προσκαθίσεις, ἀλλοκότους προσκυνήσεις*, etc. "O wretched Greeks (says he, speaking to his then declining countrymen), who in a way of superstition run so easily into the relish of barbarous nations, and bring into religion that frightful mien of sordid and vilifying devotion, ill-favoured humiliation and contrition, abject looks and countenances, consternation, prostrations, disfigurations, and in the act of worship, distortions, constrained and painful postures of the body, wry faces, beggarly tones, mumpings, grimaces, cringings, and the rest of this kind. . . . A shame indeed to us Grecians! . . . For to us (we know),

'tis prescribed from of old by our peculiar laws concerning music and the public choruses, that we should perform in the handsomest manner, and with a just and manly countenance, avoiding those grimaces and contortions of which some singers contract a habit. And shall we not in the more immediate worship of the Deity preserve this liberal air and manly appearance? or, on the contrary, whilst we are nicely observant of other forms and decencies in the temple, shall we neglect this greater decency in voice, words, and manners, and with vile cries, fawnings, and prostitute behaviour betray the natural dignity and majesty of that divine religion and national worship delivered down to us by our forefathers, and purged from everything of a barbarous and savage kind?"

What Plutarch mentions here of the just countenance or liberal air, the *στόμα δίκαιον*, of the musical performer, is agreeably illustrated in his Alcibiades. 'Twas that heroic youth, who, as appears by this historian, first gave occasion to the Athenians of the higher rank wholly to abandon the use of flutes; which had before been highly in favour with them. The reason given, was "the illiberal air which attended such performers, and the unmanly disfiguration of their looks and countenance which this piping work produced." As for the real figure or plight of the superstitious mind, our author thus describes it: "Gladly would the poor comfortless mind by whiles keep festival and rejoice; but such as its religion is, there can be no free mirth or joy belonging to it. Public thanksgivings are but private mournings. Sighs and sorrows accompany its praises. Fears and horrors corrupt its best affections. When it assumes the outward ornaments of best apparel for the temple, it even then strikes melancholy and appears in paleness and ghastly looks. While it worships, it trembles. It sends up vows in faint and feeble voices, with eager hopes, desires, and passions, discoverable in the whole disorder of the outward frame; and, in the main, it evinces plainly by practice, that the notion of Pythagoras was but vain, who dared assert that we were then in the best state, and carried our most becoming looks with us, when we approached the Gods. For then above all other seasons are the superstitious found in the most abject miserable state of mind, and with the meanest presence and behaviour, approaching the sacred shrines of the Divine Powers in the same manner as they would the dens of bears or lions, the caves of basilisks or dragons, or other hideous recesses of wild beasts or raging monsters. To me therefore it appears wonderful, that we should arraign atheism as impious, whilst superstition escapes the charge. Shall he who holds there are no Divine Powers be esteemed impious, and shall not he be esteemed far more impious who holds the Divine Beings such in their nature as the superstitious where it will plainly enough appear[1] what a share good humour had in that which the politer ancients esteemed as piety and true religion.

But now, methinks, I have been sufficiently grave and serious in defence of what is directly contrary to seriousness

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believe and represent? For my own part, I had rather men should say of me," etc. See Treatise I. § 5 in the notes. Nothing can be more remarkable than what our author says again, a little below. "The atheist believes there is no Deity, the religionist or superstitious believer wishes there were none. If he believes, 'tis against his will; mistrust he dares not, nor call his thought in question. But could he with security, at once, throw off that oppressive fear which like the rock of Tantallus impends and presses over him, he would with equal joy spurn his enslaving thought, and embrace the atheist's state and opinion as his happiest deliverance. Atheists are free of superstition, but the superstitious are ever willing atheists, though impotent in their thought, and unable to believe of the Divine Being as they gladly would. *νυνὶ δὲ τῷ μὲν ἀθέῳ δεισιδαιμονίας οὐδὲν μέτεστιν, ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων τῇ προαιρέσει ἄθεος ὤν, ἀσθενέστερός ἐστιν ἢ τοῦ δοξάζειν περὶ θεῶν ὃ βούλεται.*" See Treatise I. § 45.

[1] Where speaking of religion as it stood in the heathen church and in his own time, he confesses "That as to the vulgar disposition there was no remedy. Many even of the better sort would be found, of course, to intermix with their veneration and esteem something of terror or fear in their religious worship, which might give it perhaps the character of superstition; but that this evil was a thousand times over-balanced by the satisfaction, hope, joy, and delight which attended religious worship. This (says he) is plain and evident from the most demonstrable testimonies, for neither the societies or public meetings in the temples, nor the festivals themselves, nor any other diverting parties, sights, or entertainments, are more delightful or rejoicing than what we ourselves behold, and act in the divine worship and in the holy sacrifices and mysteries which belong to it. Our disposition and temper is not, on this occasion, as if we were in the presence of worldly potentates, dread sovereigns, and despotic princes. Nor are we here found meanly humbling ourselves, crouching in fear and awe, and full of anxiety and confusion as would be natural to us in such a case. But where the divinity is esteemed the nearest and most immediately present, there horrors and amazements are the furthest banished; there the heart, we find, gives freest way to pleasure, to entertainment, to play, mirth, humour, and diversion, and this even to an excess."

and gravity. I have very solemnly pleaded for gaiety and good humour; I have declaimed against pedantry in learned language, and opposed formality in form; I now find myself somewhat impatient to get loose from the constraint of method; and I pretend lawfully to exercise the privilege which I have asserted of rambling from subject to subject, from style to style, in my miscellaneous manner according to my present profession and character.

I may, in the meanwhile, be censured probably for passing over my third head. But the methodical reader, if he be scrupulous about it, may content himself with looking back, and if possibly he can pick it out of my second, he will forgive this anticipation in a writing which is governed less by form than humour. I had indeed resolved with myself to make a large collection of passages from our most eminent and learned divines, in order to have set forth this latter head of my chapter, and by better authority than my own to have evinced "that we had in the main good-humoured religion." But after considering a little while, I came to this short issue with myself, "that it was better not to cite at all than to cite partially." Now if I cited fairly what was said as well on the melancholy as the cheerful side of our religion, the matter, I found, would be pretty doubtfully balanced, and the result at last would be this, "that, generally speaking, as oft as a divine was in good humour, we should find religion the sweetest and best humoured thing in nature, but at other times (and that pretty often) we should find a very different face of matters."

Thus are we alternately exalted and humbled, cheered and dejected, according as our spiritual[1] director is himself influenced, and this, peradventure for our edification and advantage "that by these contrarieties and changes we may be rendered more supple and compliant." If we are very low and down we are taken up, if we are up and high we are taken down. This is discipline, this is authority and command. Did religion carry constantly one and the same face, and were it always represented to us alike in every respect, we might perhaps be overbold and make acquaintance with it in too familiar a manner; we might think ourselves fully knowing in it and assured of its true character and genius. From whence perhaps we might become more refractory towards the ghostly teachers of it, and be apt to submit ourselves the less to those who by appointment and authority represent it to us in such lights as they esteem most proper and convenient.

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[1] *Supra,* p. 179.

I shall therefore not only conclude abruptly but even sceptically on this my last head, referring my reader to what has been said already on my preceding heads for the bare probability "of our having in the main a witty and good-humoured religion."

This, however, I may presume to assert, that there are undoubtedly some countenances or aspects of our religion which are humorous and pleasant in themselves, and that the sadder representations of it are many times so over-sad and dismal, that they are apt to excite a very contrary passion to what is intended by the representers.

MISCELLANY III

CHAPTER I

Further remarks on the author of the treatises—His order and design—His remarks on the succession of wit, and progress of letters, and philosophy—Of words, relations, affections—Countrymen and country—Old England—Patriots of the soil—Virtuosi and philosophers—A taste.

Having already asserted my privilege as a miscellaneous or essay writer of the modern establishment, to write on every subject and in every method as I fancy, to use order or lay it aside as I think fit, and to treat of order and method in other works, though free perhaps and unconfined as to my own; I shall presume, in this place, to consider the present method and order of my author's treatises as in this joint edition they are ranged.

Notwithstanding the high airs of scepticism which our author assumes in his first piece, I cannot, after all, but imagine that even there he proves himself at the bottom a real dogmatist, and shows plainly that he has his private opinion, belief, or faith, as strong as any devotee or religionist of them all. Though he affects perhaps to strike at other hypotheses and schemes, he has something of his own still in reserve, and holds a certain plan or system peculiar to himself, or such at least in which he has at present but few companions or followers.

On this account I look upon his management to have been much after the rate of some ambitious architect, who being called perhaps to prop a roof, redress a leaning wall or add to some particular apartment, is not contented with this small specimen of his mastership; but pretending to demonstrate the unserviceableness and inconvenience of the old fabric, forms the design of a new building, and longs to show his skill in the principal part of architecture and mechanics.

'Tis certain that in matters of learning and philosophy the practice of pulling down is far pleasanter and affords more entertainment than that of building and setting up. Many have succeeded to a miracle in the first, who have miserably failed in the latter of these attempts. We may find a thousand engineers who can sap, undermine, and blow up with admirable dexterity, for one single one who can build a fort or lay the platform of a citadel. And though compassion in real war may make the ruinous practice less delightful, 'tis certain that in the literate warring-world, the springing of mines, the blowing up of towers, bastions, and ramparts of philosophy with systems, hypotheses, opinions and doctrines into the air, is a spectacle of all other the most naturally rejoicing.

Our author, we suppose, might have done well to consider this. We have fairly conducted him through his first and second letter, and have brought him, as we see here, into his third piece. He has hitherto, methinks, kept up his sapping method and unravelling humour with tolerable good grace. He has given only some few and very slender hints[1] of going further or attempting to erect any scheme or model which may discover his pretence to a real architect-capacity. Even in this his third piece he carries with him the same sceptical mien, and what he offers by way of project or hypothesis is very faint, hardly spoken aloud, but muttered to himself in a kind of dubious whisper or feigned soliloquy. What he discovers of form and method is indeed so accompanied with the random miscellaneous air, that it may pass for raillery rather than good earnest. 'Tis in his following treatise [2] that he discovers himself openly as a plain dogmatist, a formalist, and man of method; with his hypothesis tacked to him, and his opinions so close sticking as would force one to call to mind the figure of some precise and strait-laced professor in a university.

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[1] Viz. in the *Letter of Enthusiasm*, §§ 5 and 6; so again, Treatise II. part i. § 6; and iii. § 3; and again, Treatise III. part iii. § 1; where the inquiry is proposed and the system and genealogy of the affections previously treated; with an apology (p. 202) for the examining practice and seeming pedantry of the method. And afterwards the apology for Treatise IV. in Treatise V. part ii. § 3. Concerning this series and dependency of these joint treatises see more particularly below, *Misc.* iv. beginning.

What may be justly pleaded in his behalf when we come in company with him to inquire into such solemn and profound subjects, seems very doubtful. Meanwhile as his affairs stand hitherto in this his treatise of advice, I shall be contented to yoke with him and proceed in my miscellaneous manner, to give my advice also to men of note, whether they are authors or politicians, virtuosi or fine gentlemen; comprehending him, the said author, as one of the number of the advised, and myself too (if occasion be) after his own example of self-admonition and private address.

But first as to our author's dissertation in this [2] third treatise, where his reflections upon authors in general and the rise and progress of arts make the inlet or introduction to his philosophy; we may observe that it is not without some appearance of reason that he has advanced this method. It must be acknowledged that though in the earliest times there may have been divine men of a transcending genius who have given laws both in religion and government to the great advantage and improvement of mankind; yet philosophy itself as a science and known profession worthy of that name, cannot with any probability be supposed to have risen (as our author shows) till

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[1] Viz. Treatise v. the *Inquiry concerning Virtue.*

[2] Part ii. § 2.

other arts had been raised, and in a certain proportion advanced before it. And as this was of the greatest dignity and weight, so it came last into form. It was long clearing itself from the affected dress of sophists, or enthusiastic air of poets, and appeared late in its genuine, simple, and just beauty.

The reader perhaps may justly excuse our author for having in this place so overloaded his margin with those weighty authorities and ancient citations,[1] when he knows that there are many grave professors in humanity and letters among the moderns who are puzzled in this search, and write both repugnantly to one another and to the plain and natural evidence of the case. The real lineage and succession of wit is indeed plainly founded in Nature, as our author has endeavoured to make appear both from history and fact. The Greek nation, as it is original to us in respect to these polite arts and sciences, so it was in reality original to itself. For whether the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Thracians, or barbarians of any kind may have hit fortunately on this or that particular invention, either in agriculture, building, navigation, or letters, whichever may have introduced this rite of worship, this title of a deity, this or that instrument of music, this or that festival, game, or dance (for on this matter there are high debates among the learned), 'tis evident, beyond a doubt, that the arts and sciences were formed in Greece itself. 'Twas there that music, poetry, and the rest came to receive some kind of shape and be distinguished into their several orders and degrees. Whatever flourished or was raised to any degree of correctness or real perfection in the kind was by means of Greece alone, and in the hand of that sole polite, most civilised, and accomplished nation.

Nor can this appear strange when we consider the fortunate constitution of that people. For though composed of different nations, distinct in laws and governments, divided by seas and continents, dispersed in distant islands, yet being originally of the same extract, united by one single language, and animated by that social public and free spirit which, notwithstanding the animosity of their several warring states, induced them to erect such heroic congresses and powers as those which constituted the Amphictyonian councils, the Olympic, Isthmian, and other games, they could not but naturally polish and refine each other. 'Twas thus they brought their beautiful and comprehensive language to a just standard, leaving only such variety in the dialects as rendered their poetry, in particular, so much the more agreeable. The standard was in the same proportion carried into other arts; the secretion was made; the several species found and set apart; the performers and masters in every kind honoured and admired; and, last of all, even critics themselves acknowledged and received as masters over all the rest. From music, poetry, rhetoric, down to the simple prose of history, through all the plastic arts of sculpture, statuary, painting, architecture, and the rest; everything muse-like, graceful, and exquisite was rewarded with the highest honours and carried on with the utmost ardour and emulation. Thus Greece, though she exported arts to other nations, had properly for her own share no import of the kind. The utmost which could be named would amount to no more than raw materials of a rude and barbarous form. And thus the nation was evidently original in art; and with them every noble study and science was (as the great master, so often cited by our author, says of certain kinds of poetry) self-formed,[1] wrought out of Nature, and drawn from the necessary operation and course of things, working, as it were, of their own accord and proper inclination.

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[1] *Advice to an Author,* part ii. § 2.

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[1] *αὐτοσχεδιαστική.* Treatise III. part ii. § 2. 'Tis in this sense of the natural production and self-formation of the arts, in this free state of ancient Greece, that the same great master uses this word a little before, in the same chapter of his *Poetics*, viz. the 4th, speaking in general of the poets: *κατὰ μικρὸν προάγοντες, ἐγέννησαν τὴν ποίησιν, ἐκ τῶν αὐτοσχεδιασμάτων.* ["Advancing step by step they produced poetry out of their improvisations."—Arist. *Poet.* iv. 6.] And presently after, *λέξεως δὲ γενομένης, αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὗρε.* ["When dialogue was introduced, Nature herself found out the appropriate metre."—*Ib.* iv. 14.]

Now, according to this natural growth of arts peculiar to Greece, it would necessarily happen that at the beginning, when the force of language came to be first proved, when the admiring world made their first judgment and essayed their taste in the elegancies of this sort, the lofty, the sublime, the astonishing and amazing would be the most in fashion and preferred. Metaphorical speech, multiplicity of figures and high-sounding words would naturally prevail. Though in the commonwealth itself and in the affairs of government men were used originally to plain and direct speech, yet when speaking became an art and was taught by sophists and other pretended masters, the high poetic and the figurative way began to prevail even at the Bar and in the public assemblies, insomuch that the grand-master, in the above-cited part of his Rhetorics, where he extols the tragic poet Euripides, upbraids the rhetoricians of his own age, who retained that very bombastic style, which even poets, and those too of the tragic kind, had already thrown off, or at least considerably mitigated. But the taste of Greece was now polishing. A better judgment was soon formed when a Demosthenes was heard and had found success. The people themselves (as our author has shown) came now to reform their comedy and familiar manner, after tragedy and the higher style had been brought to its perfection under the last hand of an Euripides. And now in all the principal works of ingenuity and art, simplicity and Nature began chiefly to be sought; and this was the taste which lasted through so many ages, till the ruin of all things under a universal monarch.

If the reader should peradventure be led by his curiosity to seek some kind of comparison between this ancient growth of taste and that which we have experienced in modern days and within our own nation, he may look back to the speeches of our ancestors in Parliament. He will find them, generally speaking, to have been very short and plain, but coarse and what we properly call home-spun, till learning came in vogue and science was known amongst us. When our princes and senators became scholars they spoke scholastically. And the pedantic style was prevalent from the first dawn of letters, about the age of the Reformation, till long afterwards. Witness the best written discourses, the admired speeches, orations, or sermons, through several reigns, down to these latter, which we compute within the present age. 'Twill undoubtedly be found that till very late days the fashion of speaking and the turn of wit was after the figurative and florid manner. Nothing was so acceptable as the high-sounding phrase, the far-fetched comparison, the capricious point, and play of words; and nothing so despicable as what was merely of the plain or natural kind. So that it must either be confessed that in respect of the preceding age we are fallen very low in taste, or that, if we are in reality improved, the natural and simple manner which conceals and covers art is the most truly artful, and of the genteelest, truest, and best studied taste, as has above been treated more at large.[1]

Now, therefore, as to our author's philosophy itself, as it lies concealed in this treatise,[2] but more professed and formal in his next,[3] we shall proceed gradually according to his own method, since it becomes not one who has undertaken the part of his airy assistant and humorous paraphrast to enter suddenly without good preparation into his dry reasonings and moral researches about the social passions and natural affections, of which he is such a punctilious examiner.

Of all human affections, the noblest and most becoming human nature is that of love to one's country. This, perhaps, will easily be allowed by all men who have really a country, and are of the number of those who may be called a people,[4] as enjoying the happiness of a real constitution and polity by which they are free and independent. There are few such countrymen or freemen so degenerate as directly to discountenance or condemn this passion of love to their community and national brotherhood. The indirect manner of opposing this principle is the most usual. We hear it commonly as a complaint, "That there is little of this love extant in the world." From whence 'tis hastily concluded, "That there is little or nothing of friendly or social affection inherent in our nature or proper to our species." 'Tis however apparent that there is scarce a creature of human kind who is not possessed at least of some inferior degree or meaner sort of this natural affection to a country.

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[1] *Misc.* i. 3; and Treatise III. part ii. § 2.

[2] Viz. *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author*; Treatise III.

[3] Viz. *Inquiry*, etc.; Treatise IV.

[4] A multitude held together by force, though under one and the same head, is not properly united. Nor does such a body make a people. 'Tis the social league, confederacy, and mutual consent, founded in some common good or interest, which joins the members of a community and makes a

> Nescioqua natale solum dulcedine captos
> Ducit.[1]

'Tis a wretched aspect of humanity which we figure to ourselves when we would endeavour to resolve the very essence and foundation of this generous passion into a relation to mere clay and dust, exclusively of anything sensible, intelligent, or moral. 'Tis, I must own, on certain[2] relations or respective proportions that all natural affection does in some measure depend. And in this view it cannot, I confess, be denied that we have each of us a certain relation to the mere earth itself, the very mould or surface of that planet in which, with other animals of various sorts, we (poor reptiles !) were also bred and nourished. But had it happened to one of us British men to have been born at sea, could we not therefore properly be called British men ? Could we be allowed countrymen of no sort, as having no distinct relation to any certain soil or region ; no original neighbourhood but with the watery inhabitants and sea-monsters ? Surely, if

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people one. Absolute power annuls the public. And where there is no public or constitution there is in reality no mother country or nation. See Treatise III. part iii. § 1.

[1] Ovid, *Pont.* I. iii. 35. ["Our own country charms and draws us with a certain sweetness."]

[2] τὰ καθήκοντα ταῖς σχέσεσι παραμετρεῖται.

we were born of lawful parents, lawfully employed, and under the protection of law, wherever they might be then detained, to whatever colonies sent, or whithersoever driven by any accident, or in expeditions or adventures in the public service or that of mankind, we should still find we had a home and country ready to lay claim to us. We should be obliged still to consider ourselves as fellow-citizens, and might be allowed to love our country or nation as honestly and heartily as the most inland inhabitant or native of the soil. Our political and social capacity would undoubtedly come in view, and be acknowledged full as natural and essential in our species as the parental and filial kind, which gives rise to what we peculiarly call natural affection. Or supposing that both our birth and parents had been unknown, and that in this respect we were in a manner younger brothers in society to the rest of mankind, yet from our nurture and education we should surely espouse some country or other, and joyfully embracing the protection of a magistracy, should of necessity and by force of nature join ourselves to the general society of mankind, and those in particular with whom we had entered into a nearer communication of benefits and closer sympathy of affections. It may therefore be esteemed no better than a mean subterfuge of narrow minds to assign this natural passion for society and a country to such a relation as that of a mere fungus or common excrescence to its parent-mould or nursing dunghill.

The relation of countryman, if it be allowed anything at all, must imply something moral and social. The notion itself presupposes a naturally civil and political state of mankind, and has reference to that particular part of society to which we owe our chief advantages as men and rational creatures, such as are[1] naturally and necessarily united for each other's happiness and support, and for the highest of all happinesses and enjoyments, "the intercourse of minds, the free use of our reason, and the exercise of mutual love and friendship."

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[1] Treatise II. part iii. § 1; Treatise V. part ii. § 4.

An ingenious physician among the moderns, having in view the natural dependency of the vegetable and animal kinds on their common mother earth, and observing that both the one and the other draw from her their continual sustenance (some rooted and fixed down to their first abodes, others unconfined and wandering from place to place to suck their nourishment), he accordingly, as I remember, styles this latter animal race, her released sons, filios terrae emancipatos. Now if this be our only way of reckoning for mankind, we may call ourselves indeed the sons of earth at large, but not of any particular soil or district. The division of climates and regions is fantastic and artificial ; much more the limits of particular countries, cities, or provinces. Our natale solum, or mother earth, must by this account be the real globe itself which bears us, and in respect of which we must allow the common animals, and even the plants of all degrees, to claim an equal brotherhood with us under this common parent.

According to this calculation we must of necessity carry our relation as far as to the whole material world or universe, where alone it can prove complete. But for the particular district or tract of earth, which in a vulgar sense we call our country, however bounded or geographically divided, we can never, at this rate, frame any accountable relation to it, nor consequently assign any natural or proper affection towards it.

If, unhappily, a man had been born either at an inn or in some dirty village, he would hardly, I think, circumscribe himself so narrowly as to accept a denomination or character from those nearest appendices or local circumstances of his nativity. So far should one be from making the hamlet or parish to be characteristical in the case, that hardly would the shire itself, or county, however rich or flourishing, be taken into the honorary term or appellation of one's country.

" What, then, shall we presume to call our country ? Is it England itself ? But what of Scotland ? Is it therefore Britain ? But what of the other islands, the Northern Orcades, and the

Southern Jersey and Guernsey? What of the Plantations and poor Ireland?" Behold, here, a very dubious circumscription!

But what, after all, if there be a conquest or captivity in the case? a migration? a national secession, or abandonment of our native seats for some other soil or climate? This has happened, we know, to our forefathers. And as great and powerful a people as we have been of late, and have ever shown ourselves under the influence of free councils and a tolerable ministry, should we relapse again into slavish principles, or be administered long under such heads as, having no thought of liberty for themselves, can have much less for Europe or their neighbours, we may at last feel a war at home, become the seat of it, and in the end a conquest. We might then gladly embrace the hard condition of our predecessors, and exchange our beloved native soil for that of some remote and uninhabited part of the world. Now should this possibly be our fate, should some considerable colony or body be formed afterwards out of our remains, or meet as it were by miracle in some distant climate, would there be for the future no Englishman remaining? No common bond of alliance and friendship by which we could still call countrymen, as before? How came we, I pray, by our ancient name of Englishmen? Did it not travel with us over land and sea? Did we not indeed bring it with us heretofore from as far as the remoter parts of Germany to this island?

I must confess, I have been apt sometimes to be very angry with our language for having denied us the use of the word Patria, and afforded us no other name to express our native community than that of country, which already bore two different significations abstracted from mankind or society.[1] Reigning words are many times of such force as to influence us considerably in our apprehension of things. Whether it be from any such cause as this, I know not, but certain it is, that in the idea of a civil state or nation we Englishmen are apt to mix somewhat more than ordinary gross and earthy. No people who owed so much to a constitution, and so little to a soil or climate, were ever known so indifferent towards one, and so passionately fond of the other. One would imagine from the common discourse of our countrymen that the finest lands near the Euphrates, the Babylonian or Persian paradises, the rich plains of Egypt, the Grecian Tempe, the Roman Campania, Lombardy, Provence, the Spanish Andalusia, or the most delicious tracts in the Eastern or Western Indies were contemptible countries in respect of Old England.

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[1] *rus* and *regio,* in French *campagne* and *pays.*

Now by the good leave of these worthy patriots of the soil, I must take the liberty to say, I think Old England to have been in every respect a very indifferent country, and that Late England, of an age or two old, even since Queen Bess's days, is indeed very much mended for the better. We were, in the beginning of her grandfather's reign, under a sort of Polish nobility, and had no other liberties than what were in common to us with the then fashionable monarchies and Gothic lordships of Europe. For religion, indeed, we were highly famed above all nations, by being the most subject to our ecclesiastics at home, and the best tributaries and servants to the Holy See abroad.

I must go further yet, and own that I think Late England, since the Revolution, to be better still than Old England by many a degree, and that in the main we make somewhat a better figure in Europe than we did a few reigns before. But however our people may of late have flourished, our name or credit have risen, our trade and navigation, our manufactures or our husbandry been improved, 'tis certain that our region, climate, and soil is in its own nature still one and the same. And to whatever politeness we may suppose ourselves already arrived, we must confess that we are the latest barbarous, the last civilised or polished people of Europe. We must allow that our first conquest by the Romans brought us out of a state hardly equal to the Indian tribes, and that our last conquest by the Normans brought us only into the capacity of receiving arts and civil accomplishments from abroad. They came to us by degrees from remote distances, at second or third hand; from other courts, states, academies, and foreign nurseries of wit and manners.

Notwithstanding this, we have as overweening an opinion of ourselves as if we had a claim to be original and earth born. As oft as we have changed masters, and mixed races with our several successive conquerors, we still pretend to be as legitimate and genuine possessors of our soil as the ancient Athenians accounted themselves to have been of theirs. 'Tis remarkable, however, in that truly ancient, wise, and witty people, that as fine territories and noble countries as they possessed, as indisputable masters and superiors as they were in all science, wit, politeness, and manners, they were yet so far from a conceited, selfish, and ridiculous contempt of others, that they were even, in a contrary extreme, "admirers of whatever was in the least degree ingenious or curious in foreign nations." Their great men were constant travellers. Their legislators and philosophers made their voyages into Egypt, passed into Chaldea and Persia, and failed not to visit most of the dispersed Grecian governments and colonies through the islands of the Ægean, in Italy, and on the coasts of Asia and Africa. 'Twas mentioned as a prodigy, in the case of a great philosopher, though known to have been always poor,[1] "that he should never have travelled, nor had ever gone out of Athens for his improvement." How modest a reflection in those who were themselves Athenians!

For our part, we neither care that foreigners should travel to us,[2] nor any of ours should travel into foreign countries.

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[1] Socrates.

[2] An ill token of our being thoroughly civilised, since in the judgment of the polite and wise this inhospitable disposition was ever reckoned among the principal marks of barbarism. So Strabo, from other preceding authors, κοινὸν μὲν εἶναι τοῖς βαρβάροις πᾶσιν ἔθος τὴν ξενηλασίαν. ["The expulsion of foreigners is a common measure with all barbarians."—Eratosthenes in Strabo, xvii. i. 802.]

The Ζεὺς Ξένιος of the ancients was one of the solemn characters of

Our best policy and breeding is, it seems, "to look abroad as little as possible, contract our views within the narrowest compass, and despise all knowledge, learning, or manners which are not of a home growth." For hardly will the ancients themselves be regarded by those who have so resolute a contempt of what the politest moderns of any nation besides their own may have advanced in the way of literature, politeness, or philosophy.

This disposition of our countrymen, from whatever causes it may possibly be derived, is, I fear, a very prepossessing circumstance against our author, whose design is to advance something new, or at least something different from what is commonly

divinity: the peculiar attribute of the supreme Deity, benign to mankind, and recommending universal love, mutual kindness, and benignity between the remotest and most unlike of human race. Thus their divine poet, in harmony with their sacred oracles, which were known frequently to confirm this doctrine—

ξεῖν', οὔ μοι θέμις ἔστ', οὐδ' εἰ κακίων σέθεν ἔλθοι,
ξεῖνον ἀτιμῆσαι· πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεῖνοι.

["My guest, I may not slight a stranger, even if he were a meaner man than thou art; for from Zeus are all strangers."—Homer, *Odyssey*, xiv. 56, 58.] Again,—

οὐδέ τις ἄμμι βροτῶν ἐπιμίσγεται ἄλλος.
ἀλλ' ὅδε τις δύστηνος ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκάνει,
τὸν νῦν χρὴ κομέειν· πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεῖνοι.

["And no other mortals hold intercourse with us. But this is some luckless man who has come hither in his wanderings, and we must tend him well, for from Zeus are all strangers."—*Odyssey*, vi. 205-208.] And again,—

ἀφνειὸς βιότοιο, φίλος δ' ἦν ἀνθρώποισι·
πάντας γὰρ φιλέεσκεν ὀδῷ ἔπι οἴκια ναίων.

["Rich he was, and beloved among men, for he lived by the roadside and entertained all."—Homer, *Iliad*, vi. 14, 15.]

See also *Odyssey*, lib. iii. 34, etc., and 67, etc.; lib. iv. 30, etc., and 60.

Such was ancient heathen charity and pious duty towards the whole of mankind, both those of different nations and different worships. See *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, bk. ii. part ii. § 3.

current in philosophy and morals. To support this design of his he seems intent chiefly on this single point, "to discover how we may to best advantage form within ourselves what in the polite world is called a relish or good taste."

He begins, it is true, as near home as possible, and sends us to the narrowest of all conversations, that of soliloquy or self-discourse. But this correspondence, according to his computation, is wholly impracticable without a previous commerce with the world; and the larger this commerce is, the more practicable and improving the other, he thinks, is likely to prove. The sources of this improving art of self-correspondence he derives from the highest politeness and elegance of ancient dialogue and debate, in matters of wit, knowledge, and ingenuity. And nothing, according to our author, can so well revive this self-corresponding practice as the same search and study of the highest politeness in modern conversation. For this, we must necessarily be at the pains of going further abroad than the province we call home. And by this account it appears that our author has little hopes of being either relished or comprehended by any other of his countrymen than those who delight in the open and free commerce of the world, and are rejoiced to gather views [and receive light from every quarter in order to judge the best of what is perfect, and according to a just standard and true taste in every kind.

It may be proper for us to remark, in favour of our author, that the sort of ridicule or raillery which is apt to fall upon philosophers is of the same kind with that which falls commonly on the virtuosi or refined wits of the age. In this latter general denomination we include the real fine gentlemen, the lovers of art and ingenuity, such as have seen the world, and informed themselves of the manners and customs of the several nations of Europe; searched into their antiquities and records; considered their police, laws, and constitutions; observed the situation, strength, and ornaments of their cities, their principal arts, studies, and amusements; their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and their taste in poetry, learning, language, and conversation.

Hitherto there can lie no ridicule, nor the least scope for satiric wit or raillery. But when we push this virtuoso character a little further and lead our polished gentleman into more nice researches, when from the view of mankind and their affairs, our speculative genius and minute examiner of Nature's works proceeds with equal or perhaps superior zeal in the contemplation of the insect life, the conveniencies, habitations, and economy of a race of shell-fish; when he has erected a cabinet in due form, and made it the real pattern of his mind, replete with the same trash and trumpery of correspondent empty notions and chimerical conceits, he then indeed becomes the subject of sufficient raillery, and is made the jest of common conversations.

A worse thing than this happens commonly to these inferior virtuosi. In seeking so earnestly for rarities they fall in love with rarity for rareness' sake. Now the greatest rarities in the world are monsters. So that the study and relish of these gentlemen, thus assiduously employed, becomes at last in reality monstrous; and their whole delight is found to consist in selecting and contemplating whatever is most monstrous, disagreeing, out of the way, and to the least purpose of anything in Nature.

In philosophy, matters answer exactly to this virtuoso scheme. Let us suppose a man who, having this resolution merely, how to employ his understanding to the best purpose, considers "who or what he is; whence he arose or had his being; to what end he was designed; and to what course of action he is by his natural frame and constitution destined"; should he descend on this account into himself and examine his inward powers and faculties, or should he ascend beyond his own immediate species, city, or community, to discover and recognise his higher polity or community (that common and universal one of which he is born a member), nothing surely of this kind could reasonably draw upon him the least contempt or mockery. On the contrary, the finest gentleman must after all be considered but as an idiot, who, talking much of the knowledge of the world and mankind, has never so much as thought of the study or knowledge of himself, or of the nature and government of that real public and world from whence he holds his being.

Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur?[1]—

"Where are we? under what roof? or on board what vessel? whither bound? on what business? under whose pilotship, government, or protection?" are questions which every sensible man would naturally ask if he were on a sudden transported into a new scene of life. 'Tis admirable, indeed, to consider, that a man should have been long come into a world, carried his reason and sense about with him, and yet have never seriously asked himself this single question, "where am I? or what?" but, on the contrary, should proceed regularly to every other study and inquiry, postponing this alone, as the least considerable, or leaving the examination of it to others commissioned, as he supposes, to understand and think for him upon this head. To be bubbled, or put upon by any sham advices in this affair, is, it seems, of no consequence. We take care to examine accurately, by our own judgment, the affairs of other people, and the concerns of the world which least belong to us. But what relates more immediately to ourselves, and is our chief self-interest, we charitably leave to others to examine for us, and readily take up with the first comers, on whose honesty and good faith 'tis presumed we may safely rely.

Here, methinks, the ridicule turns more against the philosophy-haters than the virtuosi or philosophers. Whilst philosophy is taken (as in its prime sense it ought) for mastership in life and manners, 'tis like to make no ill figure in the world, whatever impertinencies may reign, or however extravagant the times may prove. But let us view philosophy, like mere virtuosoship, in its usual career, and we shall find the ridicule rising full as strongly against the professors of the higher as the lower kind. Cockle-shell abounds with each. Many things exterior and without ourselves, of no relation to our real interests or to those of society and mankind, are diligently investigated; Nature's remotest operations, deepest mysteries and most difficult phenomena discussed and whimsically explained; hypotheses and fantastic systems erected, a universe anatomised, and by some notable scheme[1] so solved and reduced as to appear an easy knack or secret to those who have the clue. Creation itself can, upon occasion, be exhibited; transmutations, projections, and other philosophical arcana, such as in the corporeal world can accomplish all things; whilst in the intellectual a set frame of metaphysical phrases and distinctions can serve to solve whatever difficulties may be propounded either in logics, ethics, or any real science of whatever kind.

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[1] Pers. *Sat.* iii. 67.

It appears from hence that the defects of philosophy and those of virtuosoship are of the same nature. Nothing can be more dangerous than a wrong choice or misapplication in these affairs. But as ridiculous as these studies are rendered by their senseless managers, it appears, however, that each of them are, in their nature, essential to the character of a fine gentleman and man of sense.

To philosophise, in a just signification, is but to carry good-breeding a step higher. For the accomplishment of breeding is, to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in arts; and the sum of philosophy is, to learn what is just in society and beautiful in Nature and the order of the world.

'Tis not wit merely, but a temper which must form the well-bred man. In the same manner, 'tis not a head merely, but a heart and resolution which must complete the real philosopher. Both characters aim at what is excellent, aspire to a just taste, and carry in view the model of what is beautiful and becoming. Accordingly, the respective conduct and distinct manners of each party are regulated; the one according to the perfectest ease and good entertainment of company, the other according to the strictest interest of mankind and society; the one according to a man's rank and quality in his private station, the other according to his rank and dignity in Nature.

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[1] *Moralists*, part i. § 1.

Whether each of these offices or social parts are in themselves as convenient as becoming, is the great question which must some way be decided. The well-bred man has already decided this in his own case, and declared on the side of what is handsome; for whatever he practises in this kind,[1] he accounts no more than what he owes purely to himself, without regard to any further advantage. The pretender to philosophy, who either knows not how to determine this affair, or if he has determined, knows not how to pursue his point with constancy and firmness, remains in respect of philosophy what a clown or coxcomb is in respect of breeding and behaviour. Thus, according to our author, the taste of beauty and the relish of what is decent, just, and amiable perfects the character of the gentleman and the philosopher. And the study of such a taste or relish will, as we suppose, be ever the great employment and concern of him who covets as well to be wise and good as agreeable and polite.

Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.[2]

CHAPTER II

Explanation of a taste continued—Ridiculers of it—Their wit and sincerity—Application of the taste to affairs of government and politics—Imaginary characters in the State—Young nobility and gentry—Pursuit of beauty—Preparation for philosophy.

By this time, surely, I must have proved myself sufficiently engaged in the project and design of our self-discoursing author, whose defence I have undertaken. His pretension, as plainly appears in this third treatise[1] is to recommend morals on the same foot with what in a lower sense is called manners, and to advance philosophy (as harsh a subject as it may appear) on the very foundation of what is called agreeable and polite. And 'tis in this method and management that, as his interpreter or paraphrast, I have proposed to imitate and accompany him, as far as my miscellaneous character will permit.

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[1] *Wit and Humour*, part iv. § 1.

[2] Hor. *Epist.* I. i. 11.

Our joint endeavour, therefore, must appear this: to show "that nothing which is found charming or delightful in the polite world, nothing which is adopted as pleasure or entertainment, of whatever kind, can any way be accounted for, supported, or established, without the pre-establishment or supposition of a certain taste." Now a taste or judgment, 'tis supposed, can hardly come ready formed with us into the world. Whatever principles or materials of this kind we may possibly bring with us, whatever good faculties, senses, or anticipating sensations and imaginations may be of Nature's growth, and arise properly of themselves, without our art, promotion, or assistance, the general idea which is formed of all this management and the clear notion we attain of what is preferable and principal in all these subjects of choice and estimation will not, as I imagine, by any person be taken for innate. Use, practice, and culture must precede the understanding and wit of such an advanced size and growth as this. A legitimate and just taste can neither be begotten, made, conceived, or produced without the antecedent labour and pains of criticism.

For this reason we presume not only to defend the cause of critics, but to declare open war against those indolent supine authors, performers, readers, auditors, actors or spectators who, making their humour alone the rule of what is beautiful and agreeable, and having no account to give of such their humour or odd fancy, reject the criticising or examining art, by which alone they are able to discover the true beauty and worth of every object.

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[1] Treatise III. part iii. § 3.

According to that affected ridicule which these insipid remarkers pretend to throw upon just critics, the enjoyment of all real arts or natural beauty would be entirely lost; even in behaviour and manners we should at this rate become in time as barbarous as in our pleasures and diversions. I would presume it, however, of these critic-haters, that they are not yet so uncivilised or void of all social sense as to maintain "that the most barbarous life or brutish pleasure is as desirable as the most polished or refined."

For my own part, when I have heard sometimes men of reputed ability join in with that effeminate plaintive tone of invective against critics, I have really thought they had it in their fancy to keep down the growing geniuses of the youth, their rivals, by turning them aside from that examination and search, on which all good performance as well as good judgment depends. I have seen many a time a well-bred man, who had himself a real good taste, give way with a malicious complaisance to the humour of a company, where, in favour chiefly of the tender sex, this soft languishing contempt of critics and their labours has been the subject set afoot. "Wretched creatures! (says one) impertinent things, these critics, as ye call them! As if one could not know what was agreeable or pretty without their help. 'Tis fine, indeed, that one should not be allowed to fancy for oneself. Now should a thousand critics tell me that Mr. A——'s new play was not the wittiest in the world, I would not mind them one bit."

This our real man of wit hears patiently, and adds, perhaps of his own, "that he thinks it truly somewhat hard, in what relates to people's diversion and entertainment, that they should be obliged to choose what pleased others and not themselves." Soon after this he goes himself to the play, finds one of his effeminate companions commending or admiring at a wrong place. He turns to the next person who sits by him, and asks privately, "what he thinks of his companion's relish."

Such is the malice of the world! They who by pains and industry have acquired a real taste in arts, rejoice in their advantage over others, who have either none at all or such as renders them ridiculous. At an auction of books or pictures, you shall hear these gentlemen persuading every one "to bid for what he fancies." But at the same time they would be soundly mortified themselves if, by such as they esteemed good judges, they should be found to have purchased by a wrong fancy or ill taste. The same gentleman who commends his neighbour for ordering his garden or apartment as his humour leads him, takes care his own should be so ordered as the best judgments would advise. Being once a judge himself, or but tolerably knowing in these affairs, his aim is not "to change the being of things, and bring truth and Nature to his humour; but, leaving Nature and truth just as he found them, to accommodate his humour and fancy to their standard." Would he do this in a yet higher case, he might in reality become as wise and great a man as he is already a refined and polished gentleman. By one of these tastes he understands how to lay out his garden, model his house, fancy his equipage, appoint his table; by the other he learns of what value these amusements are in life, and of what importance to a man's freedom, happiness, and self-enjoyment. For if he would try effectually to acquire the real science or taste of life, he would certainly discover "that a right mind and generous affection had more beauty and charm than all other symmetries in the world besides." And "that a grain of honesty and native worth was of more value than all the adventitious ornaments, estates, or preferments; for the sake of which some of the better sort so oft turn knaves, forsaking their principles and quitting their honour and freedom for a mean, timorous, shifting state of gaudy servitude."

A little better taste (were it a very little) in the affair of life itself would, if I mistake not, mend the manners and secure the happiness of some of our noble countrymen, who come with high advantage and a worthy character into the public. But ere they have long engaged in it, their worth unhappily becomes venal. Equipages, titles, precedencies, staffs, ribbons, and other such glittering ware are taken in exchange for inward merit, honour, and a character.

This they may account perhaps a shrewd bargain. But there will be found very untoward abatements in it when the matter comes to be experienced. They may have descended in reality from ever so glorious ancestors, patriots, and sufferers for their nation's liberty and welfare; they may have made their entrance into the world upon this bottom of anticipated fame and honour; they may have been advanced on this account to dignities which they were thought to have deserved. But when induced to change their honest measures, and sacrifice their cause and friends to an imaginary private interest, they will soon find, by experience, that they have lost the relish and taste of life; and for insipid wretched honours of a deceitful kind have unhappily exchanged an amiable and sweet honour, of a sincere and lasting relish and good savour. They may, after this, act farces as they think fit, and hear qualities and virtues assigned to them under the titles of graces, excellencies, honours, and the rest of this mock praise and mimical appellation. They may even with serious looks be told of honour and worth, their principle, and their country; but they know better within themselves, and have occasion to find that after all the world too knows better, and that their few friends and admirers have either a very shallow wit or a very profound hypocrisy.

'Tis not in one party alone that these purchases and sales of honour are carried on. I can represent to myself a noted patriot and reputed pillar of the religious part of our constitution, who having by many and long services and a steady conduct gained the reputation of thorough zeal with his own party, and of sincerity and honour with his very enemies, on a sudden (the time being come that the fulness of his reward was set before him) submits complacently to the proposed bargain, and sells himself for what he is worth, in a vile, detestable old age, to which he has reserved the infamy of betraying both his friends and country.[1]

I can imagine, on the other side, one of a contrary party, a noted friend to liberty in Church and State; an abhorrer of the slavish dependency on courts, and of the narrow principles of bigots. Such a one, after many public services of note, I can see wrought upon, by degrees, to seek court preferment, and this too under a patriot character. But having perhaps tried this way with less success, he is obliged to change his character, and become a royal flatterer, a courtier against his nature; submitting himself and suing, in so much the meaner degree, as his inherent principles are well known at court and to his new adopted party, to whom he feigns himself a proselyte.

The greater the genius or character is of such a person, the greater is his slavery and heavier his load. Better had it been that he had never discovered such a zeal for public good, or signalised himself in that party which can with least grace make sacrifices of national interests to a crown, or to the private will, appetite, or pleasure of a prince. For supposing such a genius as this had been to act his part of courtship in some foreign and absolute court, how much less infamous would his part have proved? how much less lavish, amidst a people who were all slaves? Had he peradventure been one of that forlorn begging troop of gentry extant in Denmark or Sweden, since the time that those nations lost their liberties; had he lived out of a free nation and happily balanced constitution; had he been either conscious of no talent in the affairs of government or of no opportunity to exert any such to the advantage of mankind: where had been the mighty shame, if perhaps he had employed some of his abilities in flattering like others, and paying the necessary homage required for safety's sake and self-preservation, in absolute and despotic governments? The taste, perhaps, in strictness, might still be wrong, even in this hard circumstance; but how inexcusable in a quite contrary one! For let us suppose our courtier not only an Englishman, but of the rank and stem of those old English patriots who were wont to curb the licentiousness of our court, arraign its flatterers, and purge away those poisons from the ear of princes; let us suppose him of a competent fortune and moderate appetites, without any apparent luxury or lavishment in his manners: what shall we, after this, bring in excuse, or as an apology, for such a choice as his? How shall we explain this preposterous relish, this odd preference of subtlety and indirectness to true wisdom, open honesty, and uprightness?[1]

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[1] [The reference is presumably to Harley, who, coming of a Puritan family, set out as a strong Whig, had come round to Toryism, was made successively Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in 1711 was raised to the peerage as Earl of Oxford and appointed Lord High Treasurer. Macaulay (chap. xx., Student's ed., ii. 464-467) mentions two other noted converts from Whiggism to Toryism, Foley and Howe; but the passage in the text fits only Harley in full, his foreign policy being regarded by Shaftesbury as a betrayal of his country. Macaulay tells (p. 463) how Shaftesbury was bewildered by the different case of Wharton, whom he described as "the most mysterious of human beings, as a strange compound of best and worst, of private depravity and public virtue, and owned himself unable to understand how a man utterly without principle in everything but politics should in politics be true as steel." The case indeed failed to chime with Shaftesbury's general theory of human nature.]

'Tis easier, I confess, to give account of this corruption of taste in some noble youth of a more sumptuous, gay fancy;

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[1] [The reference here is doubtless to Harley's colleague, Henry St. John, afterwards Viscount Bolingbroke. His family and circumstances and early leanings answer to the description in the text; and he is the only public man of the day describable as a genius. Shaftesbury and he, so sympathetic in their philosophical opinions, had probably been acquaintances; and his and Harley's deliberate adoption, in 1710, of a High Church policy, as well as his previous support of the Occasional Conformity Bill, fits closely with the description of a "preference of subtlety and indirectness to true wisdom, open honesty, and uprightness." After such a criticism it is quite intelligible that Bolingbroke should make no acknowledgment of his philosophical debt to the author of the *Characteristics*.]

supposing him born truly great and of honourable descent, with a generous free mind, as well as ample fortune. Even these circumstances themselves may be the very causes perhaps of his being thus ensnared. The elegance[1] of his fancy in outward things may have made him overlook the worth of inward character and proportion: and the love of grandeur and magnificence, wrong turned, may have possessed his imagination over-strongly with such things as frontispieces, parterres, equipages, trim varlets in parti-coloured clothes, and others in gentlemen's apparel,—magnanimous exhibitions of honour and generosity! "In town, a palace and suitable furniture! In the country the same, with the addition of such edifices and gardens as were unknown to our ancestors, and are unnatural to such a climate as Great Britain!"

Meanwhile the year runs on, but the year's income answers not its expense. For "which of these articles can be retrenched? Which way take up, after having thus set out?" A princely fancy has begot all this, and a princely slavery and court dependence must maintain it.

The young gentleman is now led into a chase, in which he will have slender capture, though toil sufficient. He is himself taken. Nor will he so easily get out of that labyrinth, to which he chose to commit his steps, rather than to the more direct and plainer paths in which he trod before. "Farewell that generous, proud spirit, which was wont to speak only what it approved, commend only whom it thought worthy, and act only what it thought right! Favourites must be now observed; little engines of power attended on and loathsomely caressed; an honest man dreaded, and every free tongue or pen abhorred as dangerous and reproachful." For till our gentleman is become wholly prostitute and shameless; till he is brought to laugh at public virtue, and the very notion of common good; till he has openly renounced all principles of honour and honesty, he must in good policy avoid those to whom he lies so much exposed, and shun that commerce and familiarity which was once his chief delight.

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[1] *Wit and Humour,* part iv. § 2.

Such is the sacrifice made to a wrong pride and ignorant self-esteem, by one whose inward character must necessarily, after this manner, become as mean and abject as his outward behaviour insolent and intolerable.

There are another sort of suitors to powers, and traffickers of inward worth and liberty for outward gain, whom one would be naturally drawn to compassionate. They are themselves of a humane, compassionate, and friendly nature, well-wishers to their country and mankind. They could, perhaps, even embrace poverty contentedly rather than submit to anything diminutive either of their inward freedom or national liberty. But what they can bear in their own persons they cannot bring themselves to bear in the persons of such as are to come after them. Here the best and noblest of affections are borne down by the excess of the next best, those of tenderness for relations and near friends.

Such captives as these would disdain, however, to devote themselves to any prince or ministry whose ends were wholly tyrannical and irreconcilable with the true interest of their nation. In other cases of a less degeneracy, they may bow down perhaps in the temple of Rimmon, support the weight of their supine lords, and prop the steps and ruining credit of their corrupt patrons.

This is drudgery sufficient for such honest natures, such as by hard fate alone could have been made dishonest. But as for pride or insolence on the account of their outward advancement and seeming elevation, they are so far from anything resembling it that one may often observe what is very contrary in these fairer characters of men. For though perhaps they were known somewhat rigid and severe before, you see them now grown in reality submissive and obliging. Though in conversation formerly dogmatical and overbearing on the points of State and government, they are now the patientest to hear, the least forward to dictate, and the readiest to embrace any entertaining subject of discourse, rather than that of the public and their own personal advancement.

Nothing is so near virtue as this behaviour; and nothing so remote from it, nothing so sure a token of the most profligate manners, as the contrary. In a free government, 'tis so much the interest of every one in place, who profits by the public, to demean himself with modesty and submission, that to appear immediately the more insolent and haughty on such an advancement is the mark only of a contemptible genius, and of a want of true understanding, even in the narrow sense of interest and private good.

Thus we see, after all, that 'tis not merely what we call principle, but a taste which governs men. They may think for certain, "this is right, or that wrong": they may believe "this a crime, or that a sin; this punishable by man, or that by God": yet if the savour of things lies cross to honesty; if the fancy be florid and the appetite high towards the subaltern beauties and lower order of worldly symmetries and proportions, the conduct will infallibly turn this latter way.

Even conscience, I fear, such as is owing to religious discipline, will make but a slight figure where this taste is set amiss. Among the vulgar, perhaps, it may do wonders. A devil and a hell may prevail where a jail and gallows are thought insufficient. But such is the nature of the liberal, polished, and refined part of mankind. So far are they from the mere simplicity of babes and sucklings that, instead of applying the notion of a future reward or punishment to their immediate behaviour in society, they are apt much rather, through the whole course of their lives, to show evidently that they look on the pious narrations to be indeed no better than children's tales or the amusement of the mere vulgar:—

> Esse aliquos Manes, et subterranea regna,
>
> . . . . .
>
> Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum aere lavantur.[1]

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[1] ["That our ghosts exist and realms below the earth . . . not even

Something therefore should, methinks, be further thought of in behalf of our generous youths towards the correcting of their taste or relish in the concerns of life. For this at last is what will influence. And in this respect the youth alone are to be regarded. Some hopes there may be still conceived of these. The rest are confirmed and hardened in their way. A middle-aged knave (however devout or orthodox) is but a common wonder; an old one is no wonder at all; but a young one is still (thank heaven!) somewhat extraordinary. And I can never enough admire what was said once by a worthy man at the first appearance of one of these young able prostitutes, "that he even trembled at the sight, to find nature capable of being turned so soon; and that he boded greater calamity to his country from this single example of young villany than from the practices and arts of all the old knaves in being."

Let us therefore proceed in this view, addressing ourselves to the grown youth of our polite world. Let the appeal be to these whose relish is retrievable, and whose taste may yet be formed in morals, as it seems to be already in exterior manners and behaviour.

That there is really a standard of this latter kind will immediately, and on the first view, be acknowledged. The contest is only, "which is right; which the unaffected carriage and just demeanour; and which the affected and false." Scarce is there any one who pretends not to know and to decide what is well-bred and handsome. There are few so affectedly clownish as absolutely to disown good breeding, and renounce the notion of a beauty in outward manners and deportment. With such as these, wherever they should be found, I must confess I could scarce be tempted to bestow the least pains or labour towards convincing them of a beauty in inward sentiments and principles.

children believe, except those who are too young to pay at the baths." Juv. ii. 141-151.]

Whoever has any impression of what we call gentility or politeness is already so acquainted with the decorum and grace of things that he will readily confess a pleasure and enjoyment in the very survey and contemplation of this kind. Now if in the way of polite pleasure the study and love of beauty be essential, the study and love of symmetry and order, on which beauty depends, must also be essential in the same respect.

'Tis impossible we can advance the least in any relish or taste of outward symmetry and order, without acknowledging that the proportionate and regular state is the truly prosperous and natural in every subject. The same features which make deformity create incommodiousness and disease. And the same shapes and proportions which make beauty afford advantage by adapting to activity and use. Even in the imitative or designing arts (to which our author so often refers) the truth or beauty of every figure or statue is measured from the perfection of Nature in her just adapting of every limb and proportion to the activity, strength, dexterity, life and vigour of the particular species or animal designed.

Thus beauty and truth are plainly joined with the notion of utility and convenience,[1] even in the apprehension of every ingenious artist, the architect,[2] the statuary, or the painter.

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[1] Treatise II. part iv. § 3.

[2] In Graecis operibus nemo sub mutulo denticulos constituit, etc. Quod ergo supra cantherios et templa in veritate debet esse collocatum, id in imaginibus, si infra constitutum fuerit, mendosam habebit operis rationem. Etiamque antiqui non probaverunt, neque instituerunt, etc. Ita quod non potest in veritate fieri, id non putaverunt in imaginibus factum, posse certam rationem habere. Omnia enim certa proprietate et a veris naturae deductis moribus traduxerunt in operum perfectiones: et ea probaverunt quorum explicationes in disputationibus rationem possunt habere veritatis. Itaque ex eis originibus symmetrias et proportiones uniuscujusque generis constitutas reliquerunt. ["In Greek buildings no one placed denticules under mutules. . . . What therefore ought in reality to be put above beams and small timbers will, if in imitations it be put below, be faulty in theory: and so the ancients did not approve of this or practise it. . . . Thus they thought that what cannot

'Tis the same in the physician's way. Natural health is the just proportion, truth, and regular course of things in a constitution. 'Tis the inward beauty of the body. And when the harmony and just measures of the rising pulses, the circulating humours, and the moving airs or spirits, are disturbed or lost, deformity enters, and with it, calamity and ruin.

Should not this (one would imagine) be still the same case and hold equally as to the mind? Is there nothing there which tends to disturbance and dissolution? Is there no natural tenour, tone, or order of the passions or affections? No beauty or deformity in this moral kind? Or allowing that there really is, must it not, of consequence, in the same manner imply health or sickliness, prosperity or disaster? Will it not be found in this respect, above all, "that what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable;[1] what is harmonious and proportionable

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be done in reality cannot be correct if done in a copy thereof. For they transferred everything to their perfect works with exact accuracy and attention to the true laws of Nature, and approved only those points the explanation of which can, when discussed, show truthfulness. And so from this beginning they left us proportions and canons ready established in every kind."] Vitruvius, iv. 2, whose commentator Philander may be also read on this place. See above, Treatise III. part i., end; part iii. § 3; and below, *Misc.* v. ch. i.

[1] This is the honestum, the pulchrum, *τὸ καλόν*, on which our author lays the stress of virtue, and the merits of this cause; as well in his other Treatises as in this of *Soliloquy* here commented. This beauty the Roman orator, in his rhetorical way, and in the majesty of style, could express no otherwise than as a mystery. "Honestum igitur id intelligimus, quod tale est, ut, detracta omni utilitate, sine ullis praemiis fructibusve, per seipsum possit jure laudari. Quod quale sit, non tam definitione qua sum usus intelligi potest (quanquam aliquantum potest) quam communi omnium judicio, et optimi cujusque studiis, atque factis; qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est; etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident." ["By *right* therefore I understand what is such that, apart from expediency, without any reward or profit, it can properly be praised on its own account. What sort of thing, that is, may be understood, not so much from the definition I have given (though to some extent it may be so understood) as from the

is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good?"

general agreement of all, and from the enthusiasm and acts of the best men; they do many a thing for this one reason, that it is becoming, is proper, is right, even though they see no gain likely to follow."—Cicero, *De Finibus*, ii. 45.] Our author, on the other side, having little of the orator, and less of the constraint of formality belonging to some graver characters, can be more familiar on this occasion; and accordingly descending without the least scruple into whatever style or humour, he refuses to make the least difficulty or mystery of this matter. He pretends, on this head, to claim the assent not only of orators, poets, and the higher virtuosi, but even of the beaux themselves, and such as go no farther than the dancing-master to seek for grace and beauty. He pretends, we see, to fetch this natural idea from as familiar amusements as dress, equipage, the tiring-room, or toy-shop. And thus in his proper manner of soliloquy or self-discourse, we may imagine him running on, beginning perhaps with some particular scheme or fancied scale of beauty, which, according to his philosophy, he strives to erect by distinguishing, sorting, and dividing into things animate, inanimate, and mixed, as thus:—

In the inanimate: beginning from those regular figures and symmetries with which children are delighted, and proceeding gradually to the proportions of architecture and the other arts. The same in respect of sounds and music. From beautiful stones, rocks, minerals, to vegetables, woods, aggregate parts of the world, seas, rivers, mountains, vales. The globe. Celestial bodies and their order. The higher architecture of Nature. Nature herself considered as inanimate and passive.

In the animate: from animals and their several kinds, tempers, sagacities, to men. And from single persons of men, their private characters, understandings, geniuses, dispositions, manners, to public societies, communities or commonwealths. From flocks, herds, and other natural assemblages or groups of living creatures, to human intelligencies and correspondencies, or whatever is higher in the kind. The correspondence, union and harmony of Nature herself, considered as animate and intelligent.

In the mixed: as in a single person (a body and a mind) the union and harmony of this kind, which constitutes the real person; and the friendship, love, or whatever other affection is formed on such an object. A household, a city or nation, with certain lands, buildings, and other appendices or local ornaments which jointly form that agreeable idea of home, family, country.

"And what of this?" says an airy spark, no friend to meditation or deep thought. "What means this catalogue or scale, as you are pleased

Where then is this beauty or harmony to be found? How is this symmetry to be discovered and applied? Is it any other art than that of philosophy or the study of inward numbers and proportions which can exhibit this in life? If no other, who then can possibly have a taste of this kind, without being beholden to philosophy? Who can admire the outward beauties and not recur instantly to the inward, which are the most real

to call it? Only, sir, to satisfy myself that I am not alone or single in a certain fancy I have of a thing called beauty; that I have almost the whole world for my companions; and that each of us admirers and earnest pursuers of beauty (such as in a manner we all are) if peradventure we take not a certain sagacity along with us, we must err widely, range extravagantly, and run ever upon a false scent. We may (in the sportsman's phrase) have many hares afoot, but shall stick to no real game, nor be fortunate in any capture which may content us.

"See with what ardour and vehemence the young man, neglecting his proper race and fellow-creatures, and forgetting what is decent, handsome, or becoming in human affairs, pursues these species in those common objects of his affection, a horse, a hound, a hawk! What doting on these beauties! What admiration of the kind itself! And of the particular animal, what care, and in a manner idolatry and consecration, when the beast beloved is (as often happens) even set apart from use, and only kept to gaze on and feed the enamoured fancy with highest delight! See in another youth, not so forgetful of human kind, but remembering it still in a wrong way! a *φιλόκαλος* of another sort, a Chaerea. Quam elegans formarum spectator! See as to other beauties, where there is no possession, no enjoyment or reward, but barely seeing and admiring; as in the virtuoso-passion, the love of painting and the designing arts of every kind so often observed. How fares it with our princely genius, our grandee who assembles all these beauties, and within the bounds of his sumptuous palace incloses all these graces of a thousand kinds? What pains! study! science! Behold the disposition and order of these finer sorts of apartments, gardens, villas! The kind of harmony to the eye from the various shapes and colours agreeably mixed and ranged in lines, intercrossing without confusion, and fortunately coincident. A parterre, cypresses, groves, wildernesses. Statues here and there of virtue, fortitude, temperance. Heroes' busts, philosophers' heads, with suitable mottoes and inscriptions. Solemn representations of things deeply natural—caves, grottoes, rocks, urns and obelisks in retired places and disposed at proper distances and points of sight, with all those symmetries which silently and essential, the most naturally affecting, and of the highest pleasure, as well as profit and advantage?

In so short a compass does that learning and knowledge lie on which manners and life depend. 'Tis we ourselves create and form our taste. If we resolve to have it just, 'tis in our power. We may esteem and resolve, approve and disapprove,

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express a reigning order, peace, harmony, and beauty! . . . But what is there answerable to this in the minds of the possessors? What possession or propriety is theirs? What constancy or security of enjoyment? What peace, what harmony within?"

Thus our monologist, or self-discoursing author, in his usual strain, when incited to the search of Beauty and the Decorum by vulgar admiration and the universal acknowledgment of the species in outward things, and in the meaner and subordinate subjects. By this inferior species, it seems, our strict inspector disdains to be allured; and refusing to be captivated by anything less than the superior, original, and genuine kind, he walks at leisure, without emotion, in deep philosophical reserve, through all these pompous scenes; passes unconcernedly by those court pageants, the illustrious and much envied potentates of the place; overlooks the rich, the great, and even the fair, feeling no other astonishment than what is accidentally raised in him by the view of these impostures and of this specious snare. For here he observes those gentlemen chiefly to be caught and fastest held who are the highest ridiculers of such reflections as his own, and who in the very height of this ridicule prove themselves the impotent contemners of a species which, whether they will or no, they ardently pursue, some in a face and certain regular lines or features, others in a palace and apartments, others in an equipage and dress. "O effeminacy, effeminacy! Who would imagine this could be the vice of such as appear no inconsiderable men? But person is a subject of flattery which reaches beyond the bloom of youth. The experienced senator and aged general can in our days dispense with a toilet and take his outward form into a very extraordinary adjustment and regulation. All embellishments are affected, besides the true. And thus, led by example, whilst we run in search of elegancy and neatness, pursuing beauty, and adding, as we imagine, more lustre and value to our own person, we grow, in our real character and true self, deformed and monstrous, servile and abject, stooping to the lowest terms of courtship, and sacrificing all internal proportion, all intrinsic and real beauty and worth for the sake of things which carry scarce a shadow of the kind." *Supra, Moralists,* part iii. § 2; *Wit and Humour,* part iv. § 2; *Advice,* part iii. § 3.

as we would wish. For who would not rejoice to be always equal and consonant to himself, and have constantly that opinion of things which is natural and proportionable? But who dares search opinion to the bottom, or call in question his early and prepossessing taste? Who is so just to himself as to recall his fancy from the power of fashion and education to that of reason? Could we, however, be thus courageous, we should soon settle in ourselves such an opinion of good as would secure to us an invariable, agreeable, and just taste in life and manners.

Thus have I endeavoured to tread in my author's steps, and prepare the reader for the serious and downright philosophy which even in this[1] last commented treatise, our author keeps still as a mystery and dares not formally profess. His pretence has been to advise authors and polish styles, but his aim has been to correct manners and regular lives. He has affected soliloquy, as pretending only to censure himself, but he has taken occasion to bring others into his company and make bold with personages and characters of no inferior rank. He has given scope enough to raillery and humour, and has intrenched very largely on the province of us miscellanarian writers. But the reader is[2] now about to see him in a new aspect, "a formal and professed philosopher, a system-writer, a dogmatist and expounder." Habes confitentem reum.

So to his philosophy I commit him. Though, according as my genius at present disposition will permit, I intend still to accompany him at a distance, keep him in sight, and convoy him, the best I am able, through the dangerous seas he is about to pass.

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[1] Treatise III. (*Advice to an Author*).

[2] Treatise IV. (*The Inquiry*).

MISCELLANY IV

CHAPTER I

Connection and union of the subject-treatises—Philosophy in form—Metaphysics—Egoity—Identity—Moral footing—Proof and discipline of the fancies—Settlement or opinion—Anatomy of the mind—A fable.

We have already, in the beginning of our preceding Miscellany, taken notice of our author's plan and the connection and dependency of his joint tracts,[1] comprehended in two preceding volumes. We are now, in our commentator capacity, arrived at length to his second volume, to which the three pieces of his first appear preparatory. That they were really so designed, the advertisement to the first edition of his Soliloquy is a sufficient proof. He took occasion there, in a line or two, under the name of his printer, or (as he otherwise calls him) his amanuensis, to prepare us for a more elaborate and methodical piece which was to follow. We have this system now before us. Nor need we wonder, such as it is, that it came so hardly into the world, and that our author has been delivered of it with so much difficulty and after so long a time. His amanuensis and he were not, it seems, heretofore upon such good terms of correspondence. Otherwise such an unshapen fœtus or false birth as that of which our author in his title-page[2] complains had not formerly appeared abroad. Nor had it ever risen again in its more decent form but for the accidental publication of our author's first letter,[1] which, by a necessary train of consequences, occasioned the revival of this abortive piece, and gave usherance to its companions.

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[1] Above, p. 239; again below, *Misc.* v. 2.

[2] Viz. to the *Inquiry* (Treatise iv.).

It will appear, therefore, in this joint edition of our author's Five Treatises that the three former are preparatory to the fourth, on which we are now entered, and the fifth (with which he concludes) a kind of apology for this revived Treatise concerning virtue and religion.

As for his Apology, particularly in what relates to revealed religion and a world to come, I commit the reader to the disputant divines and gentlemen whom our author has introduced in that concluding piece of dialogue writing or rhapsodical philosophy. Meanwhile we have here no other part left us than to enter into the dry philosophy and rigid manner of our author, without any excursions into various literature, without help from the comic or tragic muse, or from the flowers of poetry or rhetoric.

Such is our present pattern and strict moral task, which our more humorous reader, foreknowing, may immediately, if he pleases, turn over, skipping (as is usual in many grave works) a chapter or two as he proceeds. We shall, to make amends, endeavour afterwards, in our following Miscellany, to entertain him again with more cheerful fare, and afford him a dessert to rectify his palate, and leave his mouth at last in good relish.

To the patient and grave reader, therefore, who in order to moralise can afford to retire into his closet, as to some religious or devout exercise, we presume thus to offer a few reflections in the support of our author's profound inquiry. And, accordingly, we are to imagine our author speaking as follows.

How little regard soever may be shown to that moral speculation or inquiry which we call the study of ourselves, it must, in strictness, be yielded that all knowledge whatsoever depends upon this previous one, "and that we can in reality be assured of nothing till we are first assured of what we are ourselves." For by this alone we can know what certainty and assurance is.

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[1] Viz. *Letter of Enthusiasm.*

That there is something undoubtedly which thinks, our very doubt itself and scrupulous thought evinces. But in what subject that thought resides, and how that subject is continued one and the same, so as to answer constantly to the supposed train of thoughts or reflections which seem to run so harmoniously through a long course of life, with the same relation still to one single and self-same person, this is not a matter so easily or hastily decided by those who are nice self-examiners or searchers after truth and certainty.

'Twill not, in this respect, be sufficient for us to use the seeming logic of a famous modern,[1] and say, "We think, therefore we are." Which is a notably invented saying, after the model of that like philosophical proposition, that "What is, is." Miraculously argued! "If I am, I am." Nothing more certain! For the Ego or I being established in the first part of the proposition, the *ergo*, no doubt, must hold it good in the latter. But the question is, "What constitutes the We or I?" and "whether the I of this instant be the same with that of any instant preceding or to come?" For we have nothing but memory to warrant us, and memory may be false. We may believe we have thought and reflected thus or thus; but we may be mistaken. We may be conscious of that as truth which perhaps was no more than dream, and we may be conscious of that as a past dream which perhaps was never before so much as dreamt of.

This is what metaphysicians mean when they say "that identity can be proved only by consciousness, but that consciousness, withal, may be as well false as real in respect of what is past." So that the same successional We or I must remain still, on this account, undecided.

To the force of this reasoning I confess I must so far submit as to declare that, for my own part, I take my being upon trust. Let others philosophise as they are able: I shall admire their strength when, upon this topic, they have refuted what able metaphysicians object and Pyrrhonists plead in their own behalf.

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[1] Monsieur Des Cartes.

Meanwhile there is no impediment, hindrance, or suspension of action on account of these wonderfully refined speculations. Argument and debate go on still. Conduct is settled. Rules and measures are given out and received. Nor do we scruple to act as resolutely upon the mere supposition that we are, as if we had effectually proved it a thousand times, to the full satisfaction of our metaphysical or Pyrrhonean antagonist.

This to me appears sufficient ground for a moralist. Nor do I ask more when I undertake to prove the reality of virtue and morals.

If it be certain that I am, 'tis certain and demonstrable who and what I ought to be, even on my own account, and for the sake of my own private happiness and success. For thus I take the liberty to proceed.

The affections of which I am conscious are either grief or joy, desire or aversion. For whatever mere sensation I may experience, if it amounts to neither of these, 'tis indifferent and no way affects me.

That which causes joy and satisfaction when present causes grief and disturbance when absent; and that which causes grief and disturbance when present does, when absent, by the same necessity occasion joy and satisfaction.

Thus love (which implies desire, with hope of good) must afford occasion to grief and disturbance when it acquires not what it earnestly seeks. And hatred (which implies aversion and fear of ill) must, in the same manner, occasion grief and calamity when that which it earnestly shunned, or would have escaped, remains present or is altogether unavoidable.

That which being present can never leave the mind at rest, but must of necessity cause aversion, is its ill. But that which can be sustained without any necessary abhorrence or aversion is not its ill, but remains indifferent in its own nature, the ill being in the affection only, which wants redress.

In the same manner, that which being absent can never leave the mind at rest, or without disturbance and regret, is of necessity its good. But that which can be absent without any present or future disturbance to the mind, is not its good, but remains indifferent in its own nature. From whence it must follow, that the affection towards it, as supposed good, is an ill affection, and creative only of disturbance and disease. So that the affections of love and hatred, liking and dislike, on which the happiness or prosperity of the person so much depends, being influenced and governed by opinion, the highest good or happiness must depend on right opinion and the highest misery be derived from wrong.

To explain this, I consider, for instance, the fancy or imagination I have of death, according as I find this subject naturally passing in my mind. To this fancy, perhaps, I find united an opinion or apprehension of evil and calamity. Now the more my apprehension of this evil increases, the greater I find my disturbance proves not only at the approach of the supposed evil, but at the very distant thought of it. Besides that, the thought itself will of necessity so much the oftener recur, as the aversion or fear is violent and increasing.

From this supposed evil I must, however, fly with so much the more earnestness as the opinion of the evil increases. Now if the increase of the aversion can be no cause of the decrease or diminution of the evil itself but rather the contrary, then the increase of the aversion must necessarily prove the increase of disappointment and disturbance. And so, on the other hand, the diminution or decrease of the aversion (if this may any way be effected) must of necessity prove the diminution of inward disturbance, and the better establishment of inward quiet and satisfaction.

Again, I consider with myself, that I have the imagination[1] of something beautiful, great, and becoming in things. This imagination I apply perhaps to such subjects as plate, jewels, apartments, coronets, patents of honour, titles, or precedencies. I must therefore naturally seek these, not as mere conveniencies, means, or helps in life (for as such my passion could not be so excessive towards them), but as excellent in themselves, necessarily attractive of my admiration, and directly and immediately causing my happiness and giving me satisfaction. Now if the passion raised on this opinion (call it avarice, pride, vanity, or ambition) be indeed incapable of any real satisfaction, even under the most successful course of fortune; and then too, attended with perpetual fears of disappointment and loss, how can the mind be other than miserable when possessed by it? But if instead of forming thus the opinion of good, if instead of placing worth or excellence in these outward subjects we place it, where it is truest, in the affections or sentiments, in the governing part and inward character, we have then the full enjoyment of it within our power; the imagination or opinion remains steady and irreversible, and the love, desire, and appetite is answered, without apprehension of loss or disappointment.

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[1] Of the necessary being and prevalency of some such imagination or

Here, therefore, arises work and employment for us within, "to regulate fancy and rectify opinion,[1] on which all depends."

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sense (natural and common to all men, irresistible, of original growth in the mind, the guide of our affections, and the ground of our admiration, contempt, shame, honour, disdain, and other natural and unavoidable impressions), see Treatise II. part iv. § 2; Treatise III. part iii. § 3; Treatise IV. bk. i. part ii. § 3; Treatise V. part iii. §§ 2, 3; and above, *Misc.* ii. ch. i.; iii. ch. ii. in the notes.

[1] *ὅτι πάντα ἡ ὑπόληψις, καὶ αὐτὴ ἐπὶ σοί. ἆρον οὖν ὅτε θέλεις τὴν ὑπόληψιν, καὶ ὥσπερ κάμψαντι τὴν ἄκραν γαλήνη, σταθερὰ πάντα καὶ κόλπος ἀκύμων.* ["What view you take is everything, and your view is in your power. Remove it then when you choose, and then, as if you had rounded the cape, come calm serenity, a waveless bay."—Marcus Aurelius, xii. 22.]

οἷόν ἐστιν ἡ λεκάνη τοῦ ὕδατος, τοιοῦτον ἡ ψυχή. οἷον ἡ αὐγὴ ἡ προσπίπτουσα τῷ ὕδατι, τοιοῦτον αἱ φαντασίαι. ὅταν οὖν τὸ ὕδωρ κινηθῇ, δοκεῖ μὲν καὶ ἡ αὐγὴ κινεῖσθαι. οὐ μέντοι κινεῖται· καὶ ὅταν τοίνυν σκοτωθῇ τίς, οὐχ αἱ τέχναι καὶ αἱ ἀρεταὶ συγχέονται, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐφ' οὗ εἰσί· καταστάντος δὲ, καθίσταται κἀκεῖνα. ["As is the

For if our loves, desires, hatreds, and aversions are left to themselves, we are necessarily exposed to endless vexation and calamity; but if these are found capable of amendment or in any measure flexible or variable by opinion, we ought, methinks, to make trial, at least, how far we might by this means acquire felicity and content.

Accordingly, if we find it evident on one hand, that by indulging any wrong appetite (as either debauch, malice, or revenge) the opinion of the false good increases, and the appetite, which is a real ill, grows so much the stronger, we may be as fully assured, on the other hand, that by restraining this affection and nourishing a contrary sort in opposition to it, we cannot fail to diminish what is ill, and increase what is properly our happiness and good.

On this account a man may reasonably conclude, "that it becomes him, by working upon his own mind, to withdraw the fancy or opinion of good or ill from that to which justly and by necessity it is not joined, and apply it with the strongest resolution to that with which it naturally agrees." For if the fancy or opinion of good be joined to what is not durable nor in my power either to acquire or to retain; the more such an opinion prevails, the more I must be subject to disappointment and distress. But if there be that to which, whenever I apply the opinion or fancy of good, I find the fancy more consistent, and the good more durable, solid, and within my power and command, then the more such an opinion prevails in me the more satisfaction and happiness I must experience.

Now, if I join the opinion of good to the possessions of the

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water-dish, so is the soul; as is the ray which falls on the water, so are the appearances. When then the water is moved the ray too seems to be moved, yet is not. And when, accordingly, a man is giddy, it is not the arts and the virtues which are thrown into confusion, but the spirit to which they belong; and when he is recovered so are they."—Epictetus, *Diss.* iii. 3.] See Treatise III. part i. § 2; part iii. §§ 1, 2; Treatise V. part iii. § 3.

mind, if it be in the affections themselves that I place my highest joy, and in those objects, whatever they are, of inward worth and beauty (such as honesty, faith, integrity, friendship, honour), 'tis evident I can never possibly, in this respect, rejoice amiss or indulge myself too far in the enjoyment. The greater my indulgence is, the less I have reason to fear either reverse or disappointment.

This, I know, is far contrary in another regimen of life. The tutorage of fancy and pleasure, and the easy philosophy of taking that for good which pleases me,[1] or which I fancy merely, will in time give me uneasiness sufficient. 'Tis plain, from what has been debated, that the less fanciful I am in what relates to my content and happiness, the more powerful and absolute I must be in self-enjoyment, and the possession of my good. And since 'tis fancy merely which gives the force of good, or power of passing as such, to things of chance and outward dependency, 'tis evident that the more I take from fancy in this respect the more I confer upon myself. As I am less led or betrayed by fancy to an esteem of what depends on others, I am the more fixed in the esteem of what depends on myself alone. And if I have once gained the taste of liberty,[2] I shall easily understand the force of this reasoning and know both my true self and interest.

The method, therefore, required in this my inward economy, is to make those fancies themselves the objects of my aversion which justly deserve it, by being the cause of a wrong estimation and measure of good and ill, and consequently the cause of my unhappiness and disturbance.

Accordingly (as the learned masters in this science advise) we are to begin rather by the averse[3] than by the prone and forward disposition. We are to work rather by the weaning than the engaging passions; since if we give way chiefly to inclination, by loving, applauding, and admiring what is great and good, we may possibly, it seems, in some high objects of that kind, be so amused and ecstasied as to lose ourselves and miss our proper mark for want of a steady and settled aim. But being more sure and infalliable in what relates to our ill, we should begin, they tell us, by applying our aversion on that side and raising our indignation against those meannesses of opinion and sentiment which are the causes of our subjection and perplexity.

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[1] Treatise III. part iii. § 2; Treatise v. part ii. § 1.

[2] Treatise v. part iii. § 3; and below, *Misc.* v. 3.

[3] *ἆρον οὖν τὴν ἔκκλισιν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ μετάθες ἐπὶ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν.* [" Give up then aversion from all things which are not

Thus the covetous fancy, if considered as the cause of misery (and consequently detested as a real ill), must of necessity abate; and the ambitious fancy, if opposed in the same manner with resolution, by better thought, must resign itself and leave the mind free and disencumbered in the pursuit of its better objects.

Nor is the case different in the passion of cowardice or fear of death. For if we leave this passion to itself (or to certain tutors to manage for us) it may lead us to the most anxious and tormenting state of life. But if it be opposed by sounder opinion and a just estimation of things, it must diminish of course, and the natural result of such a practice must be the

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in our power; transfer it to the things contrary to nature which are in our power."—Epictetus, *Ench.* ii.]

ὄρεξιν ἆραί σε δεῖ παντελῶς, ἔκκλισιν ἐπὶ μόνα μεταθεῖναι τὰ προαιρετικά. [" You must do away with desire altogether, and transfer aversion to those things only which are within the scope of the will."—Epictetus, *Diss.* iii. 22.] This subdued or moderated admiration or zeal in the highest subjects of virtue and divinity, the philosopher calls *σύμμετρον καὶ καθισταμένην τὴν ὄρεξιν.* [" Desire settled and proportioned to its objects."—Epict. *Diss.* iv. 1.] The contrary disposition, *τὸ ἄλογον καὶ ὠστικόν.* [" Unreasonable and pushing."—Epict. *Diss.* iv. 1.] The reason why this over-forward ardour and pursuit of high subjects runs naturally into enthusiasm and disorder is shown in what succeeds the first of the passages here cited, viz., *τῶν δὲ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, ὅσαν ὀρέγεσθαι καλὸν ἄν, οὐδὲν οὐδέπω σοι πάρεστι.* [" And of things in our power, such as it would be well to desire, no one is yet set before you."—Epict. *Ench.* ii.] And hence the repeated injunction, *ἀπόσχου ποτὲ παντάπασιν ὀρέξεως, ἵνα ποτὲ καὶ εὐλόγως ὀρεχθῆσῃ εἰ δ' εὐλόγως, ὅταν ἔχῃς τί ἐν* rescue of the mind from numberless fears and miseries of other kinds.

Thus at last a mind, by knowing itself and its own proper powers and virtues, becomes free and independent. It sees its hindrances and obstructions, and finds they are wholly from itself, and from opinions wrong conceived. The more it conquers in this respect (be it in the least particular) the more it is its own master, feels its own natural liberty, and congratulates with itself on its own advancement and prosperity.

Whether some who are called philosophers have so applied their meditations as to understand anything of this language,

σεαυτῷ ἀγαθὸν εὖ ὀρεχθήση. [" Keep away altogether from desire, in order that you may some day have a desire with good reason; and if with good reason, when you have anything good in you, you will desire well."—Epict. *Diss.* iii. 13.] To this Horace, in one of his latest epistles of the deeply philosophical kind, alludes.

Insani sapiens nomen ferat, aequus iniqui,
Ultra quam satis est virtutem si petat ipsam.—*Epist.* I. vi.

[" The wise man must be called mad, the fair man unfair, if he seek even virtue too keenly."]

And in the beginning of the epistle,—

Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque quae posset facere et servare beatum.—*Ib.*

[" Not to admire is all the art I know,
To make men happy and to keep them so."—Pope's version.]

For though these first lines (as many other of Horace's on the subject of philosophy) have the air of the Epicurean discipline and Lucretian style; yet, by the whole taken together, it appears evidently on what system of ancient philosophy this epistle was formed. Nor was this prohibition of the wondering or admiring habit in early students peculiar to one kind of philosophy alone. It was common to many, however the reason and account of it might differ in one sect from the other. The Pythagoreans sufficiently checked their tyros by silencing them so long on their first courtship to philosophy. And though admiration, in the Peripatetic sense, as above mentioned, may be justly called the inclining principle or first motive to philosophy, yet this mistress, when once espoused, teaches us to admire after a different manner from what we did before. See above, *Misc.* ii. ch. i.; and Treatise I. § 5.

I know not. But well I am assured that many an honest and free-hearted fellow, among the vulgar rank of people, has naturally some kind of feeling or apprehension of this self-enjoyment when, refusing to act for lucre or outward profit the thing which from his soul he abhors and thinks below him, he goes on, with harder labour, but more content, in his direct plain path. He is secure within, free of what the world calls policy or design, and sings (according to the old ballad)—

> My mind to me a kingdom is, etc.

Which in Latin we may translate,—

> Et mea
> Virtute me involvo, probamque
> Pauperiem sine dote quaero.[1]

But I forget, it seems, that I am now speaking in the person of our grave inquirer. I should consider I have no right to vary from the pattern he has set, and that whilst I accompany him in this particular treatise, I ought not to make the least escape out of the high road of demonstration into the diverting paths of poetry or humour.

As grave however as morals are presumed in their own nature, I look upon it as an essential matter in their delivery to take now and then the natural air of pleasantry. The first morals which were ever delivered in the world were in parables, tales, or fables. And the latter and most consummate distributers of morals, in the very politest times, were great tale-tellers and retainers to honest Æsop.

After all the regular demonstrations and deductions of our grave author, I daresay 'twould be a high relief and satisfaction to his reader to hear an apologue or fable well told, and with such humour as to need no sententious moral at the end to make the application.

As an experiment in this case, let us at this instant imagine our grave inquirer taking pains to show us, at full length, the unnatural and unhappy excursions, rovings, or expeditions of our ungoverned fancies and opinions over a world of riches, honours, and other ebbing and flowing goods. He performs this, we will suppose, with great sagacity, to the full measure and scope of our attention. Meanwhile, as full or satiated as we might find ourselves of serious and solid demonstration, 'tis odds but we might find vacancy still sufficient to receive instruction by another method. And I dare answer for success should a merrier moralist of the Æsopean school present himself, and, hearing of this chase described by our philosopher, beg leave to represent it to the life by a homely cur or two of his master's ordinary breed.

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[1] Hor. *Od.* III. xxix. ["I wrap myself in my own merits and seek as my bride honest poverty, undowered."]

"Two of this race," he would tell us, "having been daintily bred and in high thoughts of what they called pleasure and good living, travelled once in quest of game and rarities, till they came by accident to the seaside. They saw there, at a distance from the shore, some floating pieces of a wreck, which they took a fancy to believe some wonderful rich dainty, richer than ambergris or the richest product of the ocean. They could prove it by their appetite and longing to be no less than quintessence of the main, ambrosial substance, the repast of marine deities surpassing all which earth afforded. . . . By these rhetorical arguments, after long reasoning with one another in this florid vein, they proceeded from one extravagance of fancy to another, till they came at last to this issue. Being unaccustomed to swimming, they would not, it seems, in prudence, venture so far out of their depth as was necessary to reach their imagined prize, but being stout drinkers, they thought with themselves they might compass to drink all which lay in their way, even the sea itself, and that by this method they might shortly bring their goods safe to dry land. To work therefore they went, and drank till they were both burst."

For my own part I am fully satisfied that there are more sea-drinkers than one or two to be found among the principal personages of mankind, and that if these dogs of ours were silly curs, many who pass for wise in our own race are little wiser, and may properly enough be said to have the sea to drink.

'Tis pretty evident that they who live in the highest sphere of human affairs have a very uncertain view of the thing called happiness or good. It lies out at sea, far distant, in the offing, where those gentlemen ken it but very imperfectly, and the means they employ in order to come up with it are very wide of the matter, and far short of their proposed end. "First a general acquaintance. Visits, levees. Attendance upon the great and little. Popularity. A place in Parliament. Then another at Court. Then intrigue, corruption, prostitution. Then a higher place. Then a title. Then a remove. A new Minister! Factions at court. Shipwreck of Ministries. The new, the old. Engage with one, piece up with t'other. Bargains, losses, after-games, retrievals." Is not this the sea to drink?

At si divitiae prudentem reddere possent,
Si cupidum timidumque minus te; nempe ruberes,
Viveret in terris te si quis avarior uno.[1]

But lest I should be tempted to fall into a manner I have been obliged to disclaim in this part of my miscellaneous performance, I shall here set a period to this discourse, and renew my attempt of serious reflection and grave thought by taking up my clue in a fresh chapter.

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[1] Hor. *Ep.* II. ii. ["But if riches could make you wise, if they could make you less lustful, less easily frightened, of course you would blush to have any one alive more avaricious than you."]

CHAPTER II

Passage from *terra incognita* to the visible world—Mistress-ship of Nature—Animal confederacy, degrees, subordination—Master animal man—Privilege of his birth—Serious countenance of the author.

As heavily as it went with us in the deep philosophical part of our preceding chapter, and as necessarily engaged as we still are to prosecute the same serious inquiry, and search into those dark sources; 'tis hoped that our remaining philosophy may flow in a more easy vein, and the second running be found somewhat clearer than the first. However it be, we may at least congratulate with ourselves for having thus briefly passed over that metaphysical part to which we have paid sufficient deference. Nor shall we scruple to declare our opinion "that it is in a manner necessary for one who would usefully philosophise, to have a knowledge in this part of philosophy sufficient to satisfy him that there is no knowledge or wisdom to be learnt from it." For of this truth nothing besides experience and study will be able fully to convince him.

When we are even past these empty regions and shadows of philosophy, 'twill still perhaps appear an uncomfortable kind of travelling through those other invisible ideal worlds, such as the study of morals, we see, engages us to visit. Men must acquire a very peculiar and strong habit of turning their eye inwards in order to explore the interior regions and recesses of the mind, the hollow caverns of deep thought, the private seats of fancy, and the wastes and wildernesses, as well as the more fruitful and cultivated tracts of the obscure climate.

But what can one do? Or how dispense with these darker disquisitions and moonlight voyages, when we have to deal with a sort of moon-blind wits, who though very acute and able in their kind, may be said to renounce daylight and extinguish in a manner the bright visible outward world, by allowing us to know nothing beside what we can prove by strict and formal demonstration?

'Tis therefore to satisfy such rigid inquirers as these, that we have been necessitated to proceed by the inward way; and that in our preceding chapter we have built only on such foundations as are taken from our very perceptions, fancies, appearances, affections and opinions themselves, without regard to anything of an exterior world, and even on the supposition that there is no such world in being.

Such has been our late dry task. No wonder if it carries, indeed, a meagre and raw appearance. It may be looked on in philosophy as worse than a mere Egyptian imposition. For to make brick without straw or stubble is perhaps an easier labour than to prove morals without a world, and establish a conduct of life without the supposition of anything living or extant besides our immediate fancy and world of imagination.

But having finished this mysterious work we come now to open day and sunshine, and as a poet perhaps might express himself, we are now ready to quit

> The dubious labyrinths, and Pyrrhonean cells
> Of a Cimmerian darkness.

We are henceforward to trust our eyes and take for real the whole creation, and the fair forms which lie before us. We are to believe the anatomy of our own body, and in proportionable order the shapes, forms, habits, and constitutions of other animal races. Without demurring on the profound modern hypothesis of animal insensibility, we are to believe firmly and resolutely "that other creatures have their sense and feeling, their mere passions and affections, as well as ourselves." And in this manner we proceed accordingly, on our author's scheme, to inquire what is truly natural to each creature, and whether that which is natural to each, and is its perfection, be not withal its happiness or good."

To deny there is anything properly natural (after the concessions already made) would be undoubtedly very preposterous and absurd. Nature and the outward world being owned existent, the rest must of necessity follow. The anatomy of bodies, the order of the spheres, the proper mechanisms of a thousand kinds, and the infinite ends and suitable means established in the general constitution and order of things; all this being once admitted and allowed to pass as certain and unquestionable, 'tis as vain afterwards to except against the phrase of natural and unnatural, and question the propriety of this speech applied to the particular forms and beings in the world, as it would be to except against the common appellations of vigour and decay in plants, health or sickness in bodies, sobriety or distraction in minds, prosperity or degeneracy in any variable part of the known creation.

We may, perhaps, for humour's sake, or after the known way of disputant hostility, in the support of any odd hypothesis, pretend to deny this natural and unnatural in things. 'Tis evident, however, that though our humour or taste be by such affectation ever so much depraved, we cannot resist our natural[1] anticipation in behalf of nature; according to whose supposed standard we perpetually approve and disapprove, and to whom in all natural appearances, all moral actions (whatever we contemplate, whatever we have in debate) we inevitably appeal, and pay our constant homage with the most apparent zeal and passion.

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[1] See what is said above on the word *sensus communis*, in that second Treatise, part iii. §§ 1, 2; part iv. § 2; Treatise III. part iii. § 3; Treatise v. part. ii. § 4; part iii. § 2, etc., concerning the natural ideas, and the preconceptions or presensations of this kind; the προλήψεις, of which a learned critic and master in all philosophy, modern and ancient, takes notice in his lately published volume of Socratic dialogues, where he adds this reflection, with respect to some philosophical notions much in vogue amongst us of late here in England. Obiter dumtaxat addemus, Socraticam quam exposuimus doctrinam magno usui esse posse, si probe expendatur, dirimendae inter viros doctos controversiae, ante paucos annos, in Britannia praesertim, exortae, de ideis innatis, quas dicere possis ἐμφύτους ἐννοίας. Quamvis enim nullae sint, si adcurate loquamur, notiones a natura animis nostris infixae; attamen nemo negarit ita esse facultates animorum nostrorum natura adfectas, ut quam primum ratione uti incipimus, verum a falso, malum a bono aliquo modo distinguere incipiamus. Species veritatis nobis semper placet; displicet contra

'Tis here, above all other places, that we say with strict justice—

mendacii : imo et honestum inhonesto praeferimus ; ob semina nobis indita, quae tum demum in lucem prodeunt, cum ratiocinari possumus, eoque uberiores fructus proferunt, quo melius ratiocinamur, ad curatioreque institutione adjuvamur. *Aesch. Dial. cum Silvis Philol.* Jo. Cler. ann. 1711, p. 176. They seem indeed to be but weak philosophers, though able sophists, and artful confounders of words and notions, who would refute Nature and common sense. But Nature will be able still to shift for herself, and get the better of those schemes, which need no other force against them than that of Horace's single verse :—

Dente lupus, cornu taurus petit : unde, nisi intus
Monstratum ?

["The wolf bites, the bull tosses you : how did they learn it, but by instinct ?"—*Sat.* ii. i. 52.]

An ass (as an English author says) never butts with his ears ; though a creature born to an armed forehead exercises his butting faculty long ere his horns are come to him. And perhaps if the philosopher would accordingly examine himself and consider his natural passions, he would find there were such belonged to him as Nature had premeditated in his behalf, and for which she had furnished him with ideas long before any particular practice or experience of his own. Nor would he need be scandalised with the comparison of a goat or boar or other of Horace's premeditating animals, who have more natural wit, it seems, than our philosopher ; if we may judge of him by his own hypothesis, which denies the same implanted sense and natural ideas to his own kind.

Cras donaberis haedo,
Cui frons turgida cornibus
Primis et venerem et proelia destinat.

["To-morrow a kid shall be sacrificed to you, a kid whose brow just sprouting with horns promises him a life of love and fighting."—*Od.* iii. xiii. 3-5.]

And

Verris obliquum meditantis ictum.

["The boar who practises his side-long slash."—*Od.* iii. xxii. 7.]

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.[1]

The airy gentlemen, who have never had it in their thoughts to study Nature in their own species, but being taken with other loves, have applied their parts and genius to the same study in a horse, a dog, a game-cock, a hawk, or any other animal[2] of that degree, know very well that to each species there belongs a several humour, temper, and turn of inward disposition, as real and peculiar as the figure and outward shape which is with so much curiosity beheld and admired. If there be anything ever so little amiss or wrong in the inward frame, the humour or temper of the creature, 'tis readily called vicious; and when more than ordinarily wrong, unnatural. The humours of the creatures, in order to their redress, are attentively observed, sometimes indulged and flattered, at other times controlled and checked with proper severities. In short, their affections, passions, appetites, and antipathies are as duly regarded as those in human kind under the strictest discipline of education. Such is the sense of inward proportion and regularity of affections, even in our noble youths themselves, who in this respect are often known expert and able masters of education, though not so susceptible of discipline and culture in their own case, after those early indulgences to which their greatness has entitled them.

As little favourable, however, as these sportly gentlemen are presumed to show themselves towards the care or culture of their own species; as remote as their contemplations are thought to lie from Nature and philosophy, they confirm plainly and establish our philosophical foundation of the natural ranks, orders, interior and exterior proportions of the several distinct species and forms of animal beings. Ask one of these gentlemen, unawares, when solicitously careful and busied in the great concerns of his stable or kennel, "whether his hound or greyhound-bitch who eats her puppies is as natural as the other who nurses them?" and he will think you frantic. Ask him again, "whether he thinks the unnatural creature who acts thus, or the natural one who does otherwise, is best in its kind and enjoys itself the most?" and he will be inclined to think still as strangely of you. Or if perhaps he esteems you worthy of better information, he will tell you "that his best-bred creatures and of the truest race are ever the noblest and most generous in their natures; that it is this chiefly which makes the difference between the horse of good blood and the arrant jade of a base breed; between the game-cock and the dunghill craven; between the true hawk and the mere kite or buzzard; and between the right mastiff, hound, or spaniel and the very mongrel." He might, withal, tell you perhaps with a masterly air in this brute-science, "that the timorous, poor-spirited, lazy and gluttonous of his dogs were those whom he either suspected to be of a spurious race, or who had been by some accident spoiled in their nursing and management, for that this was not natural to them. That in every kind they were still the miserablest creatures who were thus spoiled; and that having each of them their proper chase or business, if they lay resty and out of their game, chambered and idle, they were the same as if taken out of their element. That the saddest curs in the world were those who took the kitchen chimney and dripping-pan for their delight, and that the only happy dog (were one to be a dog oneself) was he who in his proper sport and exercise, his natural pursuit and game, endured all hardships and had so much delight in exercise and in the field as to forget home and his reward."

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[1] [" You may turn out nature with a pitchfork, yet back she will keep coming."—Horace, *Ep.* I. x. 24.]

[2] Treatise IV. bk. ii. part i. § 3; part ii. § 1; Treatise V. part ii. § 4.

Thus the natural habits and affections of the inferior creatures are known, and their unnatural and degenerate part discovered. Depravity and corruption is acknowledged as real in their affections as when any thing is misshapen, wrong, or monstrous in their outward make. And notwithstanding much of this inward depravity is discoverable in the creatures tamed by man, and for his service or pleasure merely turned from their natural course into a contrary life and habit; notwithstanding that, by this means, the creatures who naturally herd with one another lose their associating humour, and they who naturally pair and are constant to each other lose their kind of conjugal alliance and affection; yet when released from human servitude and returned again to their natural wilds and rural liberty, they instantly resume their natural and regular habits, such as are conducing to the increase and prosperity of their own species.

Well it is perhaps for mankind that though there are so many animals who naturally herd for company's sake and mutual affection, there are so few who for conveniency and by necessity are obliged to a strict union and kind of confederate state. The creatures who, according to the economy of their kind, are obliged to make themselves habitations of defence against the seasons and other incidents; they who in some parts of the year are deprived of all subsistence, and are therefore necessitated to accumulate in another, and to provide withal for the safety of their collected stores, are by their nature indeed as strictly joined, and with as proper affections towards their public and community, as the looser kind, of a more easy subsistence and support, are united in what relates merely to their offspring and the propagation of their species. Of these thoroughly associating and confederate animals, there are none I have ever heard of who in bulk or strength exceed the beaver. The major part of these political animals and creatures of a joint stock are as inconsiderable as the race of ants or bees. But had Nature assigned such an economy as this to so puissant an animal, for instance, as the elephant, and made him withal as prolific as those smaller creatures commonly are, it might have gone hard perhaps with mankind; and a single animal, who by his proper might and prowess has often decided the fate of the greatest battles which have been fought by human race, should he have grown up into a society, with a genius for architecture and mechanics proportionable to what we observe in those smaller creatures; we should, with all our invented machines, have found it hard to dispute with him the dominion of the continent.

Were we in a disinterested view, or with somewhat less selfishness than ordinary, to consider the economies, parts, interests, conditions and terms of life, which Nature has distributed and assigned to the several species of creatures round us, we should not be apt to think ourselves so hardly dealt with. But whether our lot in this respect be just or equal, is not the question with us at present. 'Tis enough that we know "there is certainly an assignment and distribution; that each economy or part so distributed is in itself uniform, fixed, and invariable; and that if anything in the creature be accidentally impaired, if anything in the inward form, the disposition, temper or affections, be contrary or unsuitable to the distinct economy or part, the creature is wretched and unnatural."

The social or natural affections, which our author considers as essential to the health, wholeness, or integrity of the particular creature, are such as contribute to the welfare and prosperity of that whole or species, to which he is by Nature joined. All the affections of this kind our author comprehends in that single name of natural. But as the design or end of Nature in each animal system is exhibited chiefly in the support and propagation of the particular species, it happens, of consequence, that those affections of earliest alliance and mutual kindness between the parent and the offspring are known more particularly by the name of natural affection.[1] However, since it is evident that all defect or depravity of affection which counterworks or opposes the original constitution and economy of the creature, is unnatural, it follows "that in creatures who by their particular economy are fitted to the strictest society and rule of common good, the most unnatural of all affections are those which separate from this community; and the most truly natural, generous and noble are those which tend towards public service and the interest of the society at large."

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[1] *στοργή*. For which we have no particular name in our language.

This is the main problem which our author in more philosophical terms demonstrates in this treatise,[1] "that for a creature whose natural end is society, to operate as is by Nature appointed him towards the good of such his society, or whole, is in reality to pursue his own natural and proper good. And that to operate contrariwise, or by such affections as sever from that common good or public interest, is in reality to work towards his own natural and proper ill." Now if man, as has been proved, be justly ranked in the number of those creatures whose economy is according to a joint-stock and public weal; if it be understood, withal, that the only state of his affections which answers rightly to this public weal is the regular, orderly, or virtuous state; it necessarily follows "that virtue is his natural good, and vice his misery and ill."

As for that further consideration, "whether Nature has orderly and justly distributed the several economies or parts, and whether the defects, failures, or calamities of particular systems are to the advantage of all in general, and contribute to the perfection of the one common and universal system"; we must refer to our author's profounder speculation in this his Inquiry, and in his following philosophic dialogue. But if what he advances in this respect be real, or at least the most probable by far of any scheme or representation which can be made of the universal nature and Cause of things; it will follow "that since man has been so constituted, by means of his rational part, as to be conscious of this his more immediate relation to the universal system and principle of order and intelligence; he is not only by Nature sociable within the limits of his own species or kind, but in a yet more generous and extensive manner. He is not only born to virtue, friendship, honesty, and faith; but to religion, piety, adoration, and a generous surrender[1] of his mind to whatever happens from that Supreme Cause or order of things, which he acknowledges entirely just and perfect."

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[1] Viz. the *Inquiry concerning Virtue.*

These are our author's formal and grave sentiments, which if they were not truly his and sincerely espoused by him as the real result of his best judgment and understanding, he would be guilty of a more than common degree of imposture. For, according to his own rule,[2] an affected gravity and feigned seriousness carried on through any subject, in such a manner as to leave no insight into the fiction or intended raillery, is in truth no raillery or wit at all; but a gross, immoral, and illiberal way of abuse, foreign to the character of a good writer, a gentleman, or man of worth.

But since we have thus acquitted ourselves of that serious part, of which our reader was beforehand well apprised, let him now expect us again in our original miscellaneous manner and capacity. 'Tis here, as has been explained to him, that raillery and humour are permitted, and flights, sallies, and excursions of every kind are found agreeable and requisite. Without this, there might be less safety found, perhaps, in thinking. Every light reflection might run us up to the dangerous state of meditation. And in reality profound thinking is many times the cause of shallow thoughts. To prevent this contemplative habit and character, of which we see so little good effect in the world, we have reason perhaps to be fond of the diverting manner in writing and discourse, especially if the subject be of a solemn kind. There is more need, in this case, to interrupt the long-spun thread of reasoning, and bring into the mind, by many different glances and broken views, what cannot so easily be introduced by one steady bent or continued stretch of sight.

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[1] Treatise IV. bk. i. part iii. § 3, near end.

[2] Treatise II. part i. § 2.

MISCELLANY V

CHAPTER I

Ceremonial adjusted between author and reader — Affectation of precedency in the former — Various claims to inspiration — Bards, prophets, Sibylline Scripture — Written oracles, in verse and prose —Common interest of ancient letters and Christianity—State of wit, elegance, and correctness—Poetic truth—Preparation for criticism on our author in his concluding treatise.

Of all the artificial relations formed between mankind, the most capricious and variable is that of author and reader. Our author, for his part, has declared his opinion of this, where he gives his advice to modern authors.[1] And though he supposes that every author in form is, in respect of the particular matter he explains, superior in understanding to his reader, yet he allows not that any author should assume the upper hand, or pretend to withdraw himself from that necessary subjection to foreign judgment and criticism, which must determine the place of honour on the reader's side.

'Tis evident that an author's art and labour are for his reader's sake alone. 'Tis to his reader he makes his application, if not openly and avowedly, yet at least with implicit courtship. Poets indeed, and especially those of a modern kind, have a peculiar manner of treating this affair with a high hand. They pretend to set themselves above mankind. "Their pens are sacred, their style and utterance divine." They write often as in a language foreign to human kind, and would disdain to be reminded of those poor elements of speech, their alphabet and grammar.

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[1] Viz. Treatise III.

But here inferior mortals presume often to intercept their flight and remind them of their fallible and human part. Had those first poets who began this pretence to inspiration been taught a manner of communicating their rapturous thoughts and high ideas by some other medium than that of style and language, the case might have stood otherwise. But the inspiring divinity or muse having, in the explanation of herself, submitted her wit and sense to the mechanic rules of human arbitrary composition; she must in consequence and by necessity submit herself to human arbitration and the judgment of the literate world. And thus the reader is still superior and keeps the upper hand.

'Tis indeed no small absurdity to assert a work or treatise, written in human language, to be above human criticism or censure. For if the art of writing be from the grammatical rules of human invention and determination; if even these rules are formed on casual practice and various use, there can be no scripture but what must of necessity be subject to the reader's narrow scrutiny and strict judgment, unless a language and grammar, different from any of human structure, were delivered down from heaven, and miraculously accommodated to human service and capacity.

'Tis no otherwise in the grammatical art of characters and painted speech than in the art of painting itself. I have seen, in certain Christian churches, an ancient piece or two, affirmed, on the solemn faith of priestly tradition, "to have been angelically and divinely wrought by a supernatural hand and sacred pencil." Had the piece happened to be of a hand like Raphael's I could have found nothing certain to oppose to this tradition. But having observed the whole style and manner of the pretended heavenly workmanship to be so indifferent as to vary in many particulars from the truth of art, I presumed within myself to beg pardon of the tradition and assert confidently, "that if the pencil had been heaven-guided it could never have been so lame in its performance." It being a mere contradiction to all divine and moral truth that a celestial hand, submitting itself to the rudiments of a human art, should sin against the art itself, and express falsehood and error instead of justness and proportion.

It may be alleged, perhaps, "that there are however certain authors in the world who, though of themselves they neither boldly claim the privilege of divine inspiration nor carry indeed the least resemblance of perfection in their style or composition, yet they subdue the reader, gain the ascendant over his thought and judgment, and force from him a certain implicit veneration and esteem." To this I can only answer, "that if there be neither spell nor enchantment in the case, this can plainly be no other than mere enthusiasm"; except, perhaps, where the supreme powers have given their sanction to any religious record or pious writ. And in this case, indeed, it becomes immoral and profane in any one to deny absolutely or dispute the sacred authority of the least line or syllable contained in it. But should the record, instead of being single, short, and uniform, appear to be multifarious, voluminous, and of the most difficult interpretation, it would be somewhat hard, if not wholly impracticable in the magistrate to suffer this record to be universally current, and at the same time prevent its being variously apprehended and descanted on by the several differing geniuses and contrary judgments of mankind.

'Tis remarkable, that in the politest of all nations the writings looked upon as most sacred were those of their great poets, whose works indeed were truly divine in respect of art and the perfection of their frame and composition. But there was yet more divinity[1] ascribed to them than what is comprehended in this latter sense. The notions of vulgar religion were built on their miraculous narrations. The wiser and better sort themselves paid a regard to them in this respect, though they interpreted them indeed more allegorically. Even the philosophers who criticised them with most severity were not their least admirers, when they ascribed[1] to them that divine inspiration or sublime enthusiasm of which our author has largely treated elsewhere.[2]

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[1] *Supra,* p. 251 in the notes.

It would, indeed, ill become any pretender to divine writing to publish his work under a character of divinity, if, after all his endeavours, he came short of a consummate and just performance. In this respect the Cumean Sibyl was not so indiscreet or frantic as she might appear, perhaps, by writing her prophetic warnings and pretended inspirations upon joint leaves, which, immediately after their elaborate superscription, were torn in pieces and scattered by the wind.

Insanam vatem aspicies; quae rupe sub ima
Fata canit, foliisque, notas et nomina mandat.
Quaecunque in foliis descripsit carmina virgo,
Digerit in numerum, atque antro seclusa relinquit.
Illa manent immota locis, neque ab ordine cedunt.
Verum eadem, verso tenuis cum cardine ventus
Inpulit, et teneras turbavit janua frondes;
Nunquam deinde cavo volitantia prendere saxo,
Nec revocare situs, aut jungere carmina curat.
Inconsulti abeunt, sedemque odere Sibyllae.[3]

'Twas impossible to disprove the divinity of such writings whilst they could be perused only in fragments. Had the sister priestess of Delphos, who delivered herself in audible plain metre, been found at any time to have transgressed the rule of verse, it would have been difficult in those days to father the lame poetry upon Apollo himself. But where the invention of the leaves prevented the reading of a single line entire, whatever interpretations might have been made of this fragile and volatile scripture, no imperfection could be charged on the original text itself.

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[1] Treatise I. end.

[2] Viz. *Letter of Enthusiasm.* And above, *Misc.* ii. ch. i. 2.

[3] ["You will see an inspired prophetess, who chants destiny at the foot of her rock and entrusts her marks and words to leaves. Whatever lines the maid has written on the leaves, she sorts into order and shuts them within her cave. There they remain unmoved nor shift from their order. Yet when the hinge turns and a breath of wind has stirred them, and the door has disordered the light leaves, never thereafter does she trouble to capture them as they flutter in her cavern or to restore their order or join the leaves. Away men go without advice and hate the Sibyl's home."—Virgil, *Aeneid,* iii. 443-452.]

What those volumes[1] may have been which the disdainful Sibyl or prophetess committed to the flames, or what the remainder was which the Roman prince received and consecrated, I will not pretend to judge; though it has been admitted for truth by the ancient Christian fathers, that these writings were so far sacred and divine as to have prophesied of the birth of our religious founder, and bore testimony to that Holy Writ which has preserved his memory, and is justly held in the highest degree sacred among Christians.

The policy, however, of old Rome was such as not absolutely to rest the authority of their religion on any composition of literature. The Sibylline volumes were kept safely locked, and inspected only by such as were ordained or deputed for that purpose. And in this policy the new Rome has followed their example in scrupling to annex the supreme authority and sacred character of infallibility to Scripture itself, and in refusing to submit that Scripture to public judgment, or to any eye or ear but what they qualify for the inspection of such sacred mysteries.

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[1] Libri tres in sacrarium conditi, Sibyllini appellati. Ad eos quasi ad oraculum quindecimviri adeunt, cum dii immortales publice consulendi sunt. Aul. Gell. i. 19; Plin. xiii. 13. ["The three books were placed in a shrine and called the Sibyl's books. The College of Fifteen consults them, like an oracle, whenever the Gods have to be consulted by the state."] But of this first Sibylline scripture, and of other canonised books and additional sacred writ among the Romans, see what Dionysius Halicarnasseus cites (from Varro's *Roman Theologics*) in his *History*, iv. 62.

The Mahometan clergy seem to have a different policy. They boldly rest the foundation of their religion on a book: such a one as (according to their pretension) is not only perfect, but inimitable. Were a real man of letters and a just critic permitted to examine this scripture by the known rules of art, he would soon perhaps refute this plea. But so barbarous is the accompanying policy and temper of these Eastern religionists that they discourage and in effect extinguish all true learning, science, and the politer arts, in company with the ancient authors and languages, which they set aside; and by this infallible method leave their sacred writ the sole standard of literate performance. For being compared to nothing besides itself, or what is of an inferior kind, it must undoubtedly be thought incomparable.

'Twill be yielded, surely, to the honour of the Christian world, that their faith (especially that of the Protestant churches) stands on a more generous foundation. They not only allow comparison of authors, but are content to derive their proofs of the validity of their sacred record and revelation even from those authors called profane; as being well apprised, (according to the maxim of our Divine Master[1]) "that in what we bear witness only to ourselves, our witness cannot be established as a truth." So that, there being at present no immediate testimony of miracle or sign in behalf of Holy Writ, and there being in its own particular composition or style nothing miraculous or self-convincing; if the collateral testimony of other ancient records, historians, and foreign authors were destroyed or wholly lost, there would be less argument or plea remaining against that natural suspicion of those who are called sceptical, "that the holy records themselves were no other than the pure invention or artificial compilement of an interested party in behalf of the richest corporation and most profitable monopoly which could be erected in the world."

Thus, in reality, the interest of our pious clergy is necessarily joined with that of ancient letters and polite learning. By this they perpetually refute the crafty arguments of those objectors. When they abandon this, they resign their cause. When they strike at it, they strike even at the root and foundation of our holy faith, and weaken that pillar on which the whole fabric of our religion depends.

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[1] John v. 31.

It belongs to mere enthusiasts and fanatics to plead the sufficiency of a reiterate translated text, derived to them through so many channels and subjected to so many variations, of which they are wholly ignorant. Yet would they persuade us, it seems, that from hence alone they can recognise the Divine Spirit and receive it in themselves, unsubject (as they imagine) to any rule, and superior to what they themselves often call the dead letter and unprofitable science. This, any one may see, is building castles in the air and demolishing them again at pleasure, as the exercise of an aerial fancy or heated imagination.

But the judicious divines of the established Christian churches have sufficiently condemned this manner. They are far from resting their religion on the common aspect or obvious form of their vulgar Bible, as it presents itself in the printed copy or modern version. Neither do they in the original itself represent it to us as a very masterpiece of writing, or as absolutely perfect in the purity and justness either of style or composition. They allow the holy authors to have written according to their best faculties, and the strength of their natural genius: "A shepherd like a shepherd; and a prince like a prince. A man of reading, and advanced in letters, like a proficient in the kind; and a man of meaner capacity and reading, like one of the ordinary sort, in his own common idiom and imperfect manner of narration."

'Tis the substance only of the narrative, and the principal facts confirming the authority of the revelation, which our divines think themselves concerned to prove, according to the best evidence of which the matter itself is capable. And whilst the sacred authors themselves allude not only to the annals and histories of the heathen world, but even to the philosophical works, the regular poems,[1] the very plays and comedies[2] of the learned and polite ancients, it must be owned that, as those ancient writings are impaired or lost, not only the light and clearness of Holy Writ, but even the evidence itself of its main facts, must in proportion be diminished and brought in question. So ill advised were those devout churchmen[3] heretofore, who in the height of zeal did their utmost to destroy all footsteps of heathen literature, and consequently all further use of learning or antiquity.

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[1] Aratus, Acts xvii. 28; and Epimenides, Titus i. 12, "even one of their own prophets"; for so the holy apostle deigned to speak of a heathen poet, a physiologist, and divine, who prophesied of events, wrought miracles, and was received as an inspired writer and author of revelations in the chief cities and states of Greece.

[2] Menander, 1 Cor. xv. 33.

[3] Even in the sixth century the famed Gregorius, Bishop of Rome, who is so highly celebrated for having planted the Christian religion by his missionary monks in our English nation of heathen Saxons, was so far from being a cultivator or supporter of arts or letters, that he carried on a kind of general massacre upon every product of human wit. His own words in a letter to one of the French bishops, a man of the highest consideration and merit (as a noted modern critic and satirical genius of that nation acknowledges), are as follow:—Pervenit ad nos quod sine verecundia memorare non possumus, fraternitatem tuam grammaticam quibusdam exponere. Quam rem ita moleste suscepimus, ac sumus vehementius aspernati, ut ea quae prius dicta fuerunt, in gemitum et tristitiam verteremus, quia in uno se ore cum Jovis laudibus Christi laudes non capiunt. . . . Unde si post hoc evidenter ea quae ad nos perlata sunt, falsa esse claruerint, nec vos nugis et secularibus literis studere contigerit, Deo nostro gratias agimus, qui cor vestrum maculari blasphemis nefandorum laudibus non permisit.—Gregorii *Opera*, *Epist.* xlviii. 9, Paris, ann. 1533. ["A story has reached me which I am ashamed to mention, that your brotherhood teaches certain pupils grammar! This news I received with such grief and rejected with such scorn that I turned what was said before into groans and lamentations; for one mouth cannot hold the praise of Jupiter and of Christ too. . . . So if hereafter the news proves false, and you have not spent your time upon trifles and worldly literature, I return thanks to God, who would not have your hearts stained with the blasphemous praise of the wicked."] And in his dedication, or first preface to his *Morals*, after some very insipid rhetoric and figurative dialect, employed against the study and art of speech, he has another fling

But happily the zeal of this kind is now left as proper only to those despised and ignorant modern enthusiasts we have

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at the classic authors and discipline, betraying his inveterate hatred to ancient learning, as well as the natural effect of this zealot-passion, in his own barbarity both of style and manners. His words are:—Unde et ipsam artem loquendi, quam magisteria disciplinae exterioris insinuant, servare despexi. Nam sicut hujus quoque epistolae tenor enunciat, non metacismi collisionem fugio; non barbarismi confusionem devito, situs motusque praepositionum casusque servare contemno; quia indignum vehementer existimo, ut verba coelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati. [“So I think scorn of observing even the art of speech, which the wider education is bringing in upon us. For, as the course of this letter shows, I do not avoid the frequent use of M; I do not shun barbarisms; I despise rules about the position or the changing or the cases of prepositions: for I strongly hold it to be unfitting to bind the words of heaven by the rules of Donatus.”] That he carried this savage zeal of his so far as to destroy (what in him lay) the whole body of learning, with all the classic authors then in being, was generally believed. And (what was yet more notorious and unnatural in a Roman pontiff) the destruction of the statues, sculptures, and finest pieces of antiquity in Rome, was charged on him by his successor in the see; as, besides Platina, another writer of his life, without the least apology, confesses. See in the above-cited edition of St. Gregory's works, at the beginning, viz. *Vita D. Gregorii* ex Joan. Laziardo Coelestino. 'Tis no wonder, therefore, if other writers have given account of that sally of the prelate's zeal against the books and learning of the ancients, for which the reason alleged was very extraordinary, “that the Holy Scriptures would be the better relished and receive a considerable advantage by the destruction of these rivals.” It seems they had no very high idea of the Holy Scriptures when they supposed them such losers by a comparison. However, 'twas thought advisable by other fathers (who had a like view) to frame new pieces of literature after the model of these condemned ancients. Hence those ridiculous attempts of new heroic poems, new epics and dramatics, new Homers, Euripides, Menanders, which were with so much pains and so little effect industriously set afoot by the zealous priesthood; when ignorance prevailed, and the hierarchal dominion was so universal. But though their power had well nigh compassed the destruction of those described. The Roman Church itself is so recovered from this primitive fanaticism that their great men, and even their pontiffs, are found ready to give their helping hand, and confer their bounty liberally towards the advancement of all ancient and polite learning.[1] They justly observe that their very traditions stand in need of some collateral proof. The conservation of these other ancient and disinterested authors they wisely judge essential to the credibility of those principal facts, on which the whole religious history and tradition depend.

'Twould indeed be in vain for us to bring a Pontius Pilate into our Creed, and recite what happened under him in Judea, if we knew not "under whom he himself governed, whose

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great originals, they were far from being able to procure any reception for their puny imitations. The mock works have lain in their deserved obscurity, as will all other attempts of that kind, concerning which our author has already given his opinion, Treatise III. part iii. § 3. But as to the ill policy as well as barbarity of this zealot—enmity against the works of the ancients, a foreign Protestant divine, and most learned defender of religion, making the best excuse he can for the Greek Fathers, and endeavouring to clear them from this general charge of havoc and massacre committed upon science and erudition, has these words: "Si cela est, voilà encore un nouveau sujet de mépriser les patriarches de Constantinople qui n'étoient d'ailleurs rien moins que gens de bien ; mais j'ai de la peine à le croire, parce qu'il nous est resté de poètes infiniment plus sales que ceux qui se sont perdus. Personne ne doute qu'Aristophane ne soit beaucoup plus sale que n'étoit Ménandre. Plutarque en est un bon témoin dans la comparaison qu'il a faite de ces deux poètes. Il pourroit être néanmoins arrivé, que quelques ecclésiastiques ennemis des belles lettres en eussent usé comme dit Chalcondyle, sans penser qu'en conservant toute l'antiquité grecque, ils conserveroient la langue de leurs prédécesseurs et une infinité de faits qui servoient beaucoup à l'intelligence et à la confirmation de l'histoire sacrée, et même de la religion chrétienne. Ces gens-là devoient au moins nous conserver les histoires anciennes des Orientaux, comme des Chaldéens, des Tyriens, et des Égyptiens ; mais ils agissoient plus par ignorance et par négligence que par raison."—*Bibl. Chois.*, xiv. 131, 132, 133.

[1] Such a one is the present prince, Clement XI., an encourager of all arts and sciences.

authority he had, or what character he bore in that remote country and amidst a foreign people." In the same manner, 'twould be in vain for a Roman pontiff to derive his title to spiritual sovereignty from the seat, influence, power, and donation of the Roman Caesars and their successors, if it appeared not by any history or collateral testimony "who the first Caesars were, and how they came possessed of that universal power and long residence of dominion."

My reader, doubtless, by this time must begin to wonder through what labyrinth of speculation and odd texture of capricious reflections I am offering to conduct him. But he will not, I presume, be altogether displeased with me when I give him to understand that, being now come into my last Miscellany, and being sensible of the little courtship I have paid him, comparatively with what is practised in that kind by other modern authors, I am willing, by way of compensation, to express my loyalty or homage towards him, and show by my natural sentiments and principles "what particular deference and high respect I think to be his due."

The issue therefore of this long deduction is, in the first place, with due compliments, in my capacity of author, and in the name of all modest workmen willingly joining with me in this representation, to congratulate our English reader on the establishment of what is so advantageous to himself—I mean that mutual relation between him and ourselves, which naturally turns so much to his advantage and makes us to be in reality the subservient party. And in this respect 'tis to be hoped he will long enjoy his just superiority and privilege over his humble servants who compose and labour for his sake. The relation, in all likelihood, must still continue and be improved. Our common religion and Christianity, founded on letters and Scripture, promises thus much. Nor is this hope likely to fail us whilst readers are really allowed the liberty to read—that is to say, to examine, construe, and remark with understanding. Learning and science must of necessity flourish, whilst the language of the wisest and most learned of nations is acknowledged to contain the principal and essential part of our holy revelation. And criticism, examinations, judgments, literate labours, and inquiries must still be in repute and practice, whilst ancient authors, so necessary to the support of the sacred volumes, are in request, and afford employment of such infinite extent to us moderns, of whatever degree, who are desirous to signalise ourselves by any achievement in letters, and be considered as the investigators of knowledge and politeness.

I may undoubtedly, by virtue of my preceding argument in behalf of criticism, be allowed, without suspicion of flattery or mere courtship, to assert the reader's privilege above the author, and assign to him, as I have done, the upper hand and place of honour. As to fact, we know for certain that the greatest of philosophers, the very founder of philosophy itself,[1] was no author. Nor did the Divine Author and Founder of our religion condescend to be an author in this other respect. He who could best have given us the history of his own life, with the entire sermons and divine discourses which he made in public, was pleased to leave it to others "to take in hand."[2] As there were many, it seems, long afterwards, who did, and undertook accordingly "to write in order, and as seemed good to them, for the better information of particular persons, what was then believed among the initiated or catechised from tradition and early instruction in their youth, or what had been transmitted by report from such as were the presumed auditors and eye-witnesses of those things in former time."

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[1] Socrates.

[2] So Luke i. 1, 2, 3, 4 : "(1) Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration (exposition or narrative, *διήγησιν*) of those things which are most surely believed among (or were fulfilled in or among) us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word ; (3) It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first (or having looked back and searched accurately into all matters from the beginning or highest time, *παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς*), to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (4) That thou mightest know the certainty (or validity, sound discussion, *ἀσφάλειαν*) of those things wherein thou hast been instructed (or catechised), *περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης*." Whether the words *πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν* in the first verse should be rendered "believed among," or "fulfilled in," or "among us," may depend on the different reading of the original. For in some copies the *ἐν* next following is left out. However, the exact interpreters or verbal translators render it "fulfilled" : *vide* Ar. Montan., edit. Plantin., 1584.

Whether those sacred books ascribed to the divine legislator of the Jews, and which treat of his death, burial, and succession,[1] as well as of his life and actions, are strictly to be understood as coming from the immediate pen of that holy founder, or rather from some other inspired hand guided by the same influencing spirit, I will not presume so much as to examine or inquire. But in general we find that, both as to public concerns, in religion, and in philosophy, the great and eminent actors were of a rank superior to the writing worthies. The great Athenian legislator,[2] though noted as a poetical genius, cannot be esteemed an author for the sake of some few verses he may occasionally have made. Nor was the great Spartan founder[3] a poet himself, though author or redeemer (if I may so express it) to the greatest and best of poets,[4] who owed in a manner his form and being to the accurate searches and collections of that great patron. The politicians and civil sages, who were fitted in all respects for the great scene of

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In verse 4 the word certainty, ἀσφάλειαν, is interpreted ἀκρίβειαν, validity, soundness, good foundation, from the sense of the preceding verse. See the late edition of our learned Dr. Mill, ex recensione Kusteri, Rot. 1710. For the word catechised, κατηχήθης (the last of the fourth verse), Rob. Constantine has this explanation of it: "Priscis theologis apud Aegyptios mos erat, ut mysteria voce tantum, veluti per manus, posteris relinquerent. Apud Christianos, qui baptismatis erant candidati, iis, viva voce, tradebantur fidei Christianae mysteria, sine scriptis: quod Paulus et Lucas κατηχεῖν vocant. Unde qui docebantur, catechumeni vocabantur, qui docebant, catechistae."

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7, etc.

[2] Solon.

[3] Lycurgus.

[4] Homer.

business, could not, it seems, be well taken out of it to attend the slender and minute affairs of letters and scholastic science.

'Tis true, indeed, that without a capacity for action and a knowledge of the world and mankind there can be no author naturally qualified to write with dignity, or execute any noble or great design. But there are many who, with the highest capacity for business, are by their fortune denied the privilege of that higher sphere. As there are others who, having once moved in it, have been afterwards, by many impediments and obstructions, necessitated to retire, and exert their genius in this lower degree.

'Tis to some catastrophe of this kind that we owe the noblest historians (even the two princes and fathers of history[1]) as well as the greatest philosophical writers, the founder of the academy[2] and others, who were also noble in respect of their birth, and fitted for the highest stations in the public, but discouraged from engaging in it, on account of some misfortunes experienced either in their own persons or that of their near friends.

'Tis to the early banishment and long retirement of a heroic youth out of his native country that we owe an original system of works, the politest, wisest, usefullest, and (to those who can understand the divineness of a just simplicity) the most amiable and even the most elevating and exalting of all uninspired and merely human authors.[3]

To this fortune we owe some of the greatest of the ancient poets. 'Twas this chance which produced the muse of an exalted Grecian lyric,[4] and of his follower Horace,[5] whose character, though easy to be gathered from history and his own works, is little observed by any of his commentators. The general idea conceived of him being drawn chiefly from his precarious and low circumstances at court, after the forfeiture of his estate, under the usurpation and conquest of an Octavius and the ministry of a Maecenas, not from his better condition and nobler employments in earlier days, under the favour and friendship of greater and better men, whilst the Roman state and liberty subsisted. For of this change he himself, as great a courtier as he seemed afterwards, gives sufficient intimation.[1]

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[1] Herodotus and Thucydides.
[2] Plato.

[3] *τὸν ἥδιστον καὶ χαριέστατον Ξενοφῶντα*, as Athenaeus calls him, xi. See Treatise III. part ii. § 2.

[4] Et te sonantem plenius aureo,
Alcaee, plectro dura navis,
Dura fugae mala, dura belli.

["And thou, Alcaeus, who tellest in a fuller tone on a lyre of gold the hardships of the sea, of exile, and of war."—Hor., *Od.* II. xiii. 26-28.]

[5] . . . Age dic Latinum,
Barbite, carmen,

Lesbio primum modulate civi,
Qui ferox bello, etc.

["Come, my lyre, utter for me a Latin song, though thou wert first tuned by a citizen of Lesbos," etc.—Hor., *Od.* I. xxxii. 3-5.]

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[1] Dura sed emovere loco me tempora grato,
Civilisque rudem belli tulit aestus in arma,
Caesaris Augusti non responsura lacertis.
Unde simul primum me dimisere Philippi,
Decisis humilem pennis, inopemque paterni
Et laris et fundi, paupertas impulit audax
Ut versus facerem.

["But the cruel times tore me away from that pleasant spot, and civil strife hurried me, with all my ignorance of war, to take up those arms which were to be no match for the might of Augustus Caesar. As soon as Philippi set me free from arms, humbled, my wings clipped, my father's house and estate lost, the fearlessness of a poor man drove me to write verses."—Hor., *Ep.* II. ii. 46-52.]

At olim
Quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribuno.

["A legion of Roman soldiers obeyed me as its officer."—Hor., *Sat.* I. vi. 47, 48.]

Viz. under Brutus. Whence again that natural boast:

Me primis urbis belli placuisse domique.

["I pleased the first men of the city in war and peace."—Hor., *Epist.* I. xx. 23.]

And again,

Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
Invidia.

Let authors therefore know themselves, and though conscious of worth, virtue, and a genius, such as may justly place them

["Envy shall confess against her will that I have ever lived with the great."—Hor., *Sat.* II. i. 76, 77.]

Where the *vixisse* shows plainly whom he principally meant by his *magni*, his early patrons and great men in the State; his apology and defence here (as well as in his fourth and sixth satires of his first book, and his second epistle of his second and elsewhere) being supported still by the open and bold assertion of his good education (equal to the highest senators, and under the best masters), his employments at home and abroad, and his early commerce and familiarity with former great men, before these his new friendships and this latter court acquaintance, which was now envied him by his adversaries.

> Nunc quia sim tibi, Maecenas, convictor : at olim
> Quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribuno.

["Now they envy me because I live familiarly with thee, Maecenas, but formerly because a legion of Roman soldiers obeyed me as officer." Hor., *Sat.* I. vi. 47, 48.]

The reproach now was with respect to a Maecenas or Augustus. Twas the same formerly with respect to a Brutus and those who were then the principal and leading men. The complaint or murmur against him on account of his being an upstart or favourite under a Maecenas and Augustus, could not be answered by a *vixisse* relating to the same persons, any more than his *placuisse* joined with his *belli domique* could relate to those under whom he never went to war nor would ever consent to bear any honours. For so he himself distinguishes (*Sat.* vi. to Maecenas)—

> Quia non, ut forsit honorem
> Jure mihi invideat quivis, ita te quoque amicum.

["The two reasons are unlike because, though perhaps a man might fairly grudge me my commission, yet he cannot fairly grudge me your friendship too."—*Sat.* I. vi. 49, 50.]

He was formerly an actor, and in the ministery of affairs; now only a friend to a minister, himself still a private and retired man. That he refused Augustus's offer of the secretaryship is well known. But in these circumstances, the politeness as well as artifice of Horace is admirable, in making futurity or posterity to be the speaking party in both those places, where he suggests his intimacy and favour with the great, that there might in some measure be room left (though in strictness there was scarce any) for an Octavius and a Maecenas to be included. See Treatise III. part ii. § 3, in the notes.

above flattery or mean courtship to their reader, yet let them reflect that as authors merely they are but of the second rank of men. And let the reader withal consider, "that when he unworthily resigns the place of honour, and surrenders his taste or judgment to an author, of ever so great a name or venerable antiquity, and not to reason and truth, at whatever hazard, he not only betrays himself but withal the common cause of author and reader, the interest of letters and knowledge, and the chief liberty, privilege, and prerogative of the rational part of mankind."

'Tis related in history of the Cappadocians, that being offered their liberty by the Romans and permitted to govern themselves by their own laws and constitutions, they were much terrified at the proposal, and as if some sore harm had been intended them, humbly made it their request, "that they might be governed by arbitrary power, and that an absolute governor might without delay be appointed over them at the discretion of the Romans." For such was their disposition towards mere slavery and subjection, that they dared not pretend so much as to choose their own master. So essential they thought slavery, and so divine a thing the right of mastership, that they dared not be so free even as to presume to give themselves that blessing, which they choose to leave rather to Providence, fortune, or a conqueror to bestow upon them. They dared not make a king, but would rather take one from their powerful neighbours. Had they been necessitated to come to an election, the horror of such a use of liberty in government would perhaps have determined them to choose blindfold, or leave it to the decision of the commonest lot, cast of die, cross or pile, or whatever it were which might best enable them to clear themselves of the heinous charge of using the least foresight, choice, or prudence in such an affair.

I should think it a great misfortune were my reader of the number of those who, in a kind of Cappadocian spirit, could easily be terrified with the proposal of giving him his liberty, and making him his own judge. My endeavour, I must confess, has been to show him his just prerogative in this respect, and to give him the sharpest eye over his author, invite him to criticise honestly, without favour or affection, and with the utmost bent of his parts and judgment. On this account it may be objected to me, perhaps, "that I am not a little vain and presumptuous in my own as well as in my author's behalf, who can thus, as it were, challenge my reader to a trial of his keenest wit."

But to this I answer, that should I have the good fortune to raise the masterly spirit of just criticism in my readers and exalt them ever so little above the lazy, timorous, over-modest, or resigned state in which the generality of them remain, though by this very spirit I myself might possibly meet my doom, I should, however abundantly congratulate with myself on these my low flights, be proud of having plumed the arrows of better wits, and furnished artillery or ammunition of any kind to those powers to which I myself had fallen a victim.

Fungar vice cotis.[1]

I could reconcile my ambition in this respect to what I call my loyalty to the reader, and say of his elevation in criticism and judgment what a Roman princess said of her son's advancement to empire, "occidat, dum imperet." [2]

Had I been a Spanish Cervantes, and with success equal to that comic author, had destroyed the reigning taste of Gothic or Moorish chivalry, I could afterwards contentedly have seen my burlesque work itself despised and set aside, when it had wrought its intended effect and destroyed those giants and monsters of the brain, against which it was originally designed. Without regard, therefore, to the prevailing relish or taste which, in my own person, I may unhappily experience, when these my miscellaneous works are leisurely examined, I shall proceed still in my endeavour to refine my reader's palate, whetting and sharpening it the best I can for use and practice in the lower subjects, that by this exercise it may acquire the greater keenness, and be of so much the better effect in subjects of a higher kind which relate to his chief happiness, his liberty and manhood.

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[1] ["I will play the part of a whetstone."—Hor., *De arte poet.* 304.]

[2] ["Let him kill me, so long as he comes to the throne."—Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 9.]

Supposing me therefore a mere comic humorist in respect of those inferior subjects, which after the manner of my familiar prose satire I presume to criticise; may not I be allowed to ask, "whether there remains not still among us noble Britons something of that original barbarous and Gothic relish not wholly purged away, when, even at this hour, romances and gallantries of like sort, together with works as monstrous of other kinds, are current and in vogue, even with the people who constitute our reputed polite world?" Need I on this account refer again to our author,[1] where he treats in general of the style and manner of our modern authors, from the divine to the comedian? What person is there of the least judgment or understanding, who cannot easily, and without the help of a divine or rigid moralist, observe the lame condition of our English stage, which nevertheless is found the rendezvous and chief entertainment of our best company, and from whence in all probability our youth will continue to draw their notion of manners and their taste of life more directly and naturally than from the rehearsals and declamations of a graver theatre?

Let those whose business it is advance, as they best can, the benefit of that sacred oratory which we have lately seen and are still like to see employed to various purposes and further designs than that of instructing us in religion or manners. Let them in that high scene endeavour to refine our taste and judgment in sacred matters. 'Tis the good critic's task to amend our common stage, nor ought this dramatic performance to be decried or sentenced by those critics of a higher sphere.

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[1] Viz. in his *Advice to Authors,* Treatise III.

The practice and art is honest in itself. Our foundations are well laid. And in the main our English stage (as has been remarked[1]) is capable of the highest improvement, as well from the present genius of our nation as from the rich ore of our early poets in this kind. But faults are easier imitated than beauties.

We find, indeed, our theatre become of late the subject of a growing criticism. We hear it openly complained "that in our newer plays as well as in our older, in comedy as well as tragedy, the stage presents a proper scene of uproar,—duels fought, swords drawn, many of a side, wounds given and sometimes dressed too, the surgeon called and the patient probed and tented upon the spot. That in our tragedy nothing is so common as wheels, racks, and gibbets properly adorned, executions decently performed, headless bodies and bodiless heads exposed to view, battles fought, murders committed, and the dead carried off in great numbers." Such is our politeness!

Nor are these plays, on this account, the less frequented by either of the sexes, which inclines me to favour the conceit our author[2] has suggested concerning the mutual correspondence and relation between our royal theatre and popular circus or bear-garden. For in the former of these assemblies, 'tis undeniable that at least the two upper regions or galleries contain such spectators as indifferently frequent each place of sport. So that 'tis no wonder we hear such applause resounded on the victories of an Almanzor, when the same parties had possibly, no later than the day before, bestowed their applause as freely on the victorious butcher, the hero of another stage; where amidst various frays, bestial and human blood, promiscuous wounds and slaughter, one sex are observed as frequent and as pleased spectators as the other, and sometimes not spectators only, but actors in the gladiatorian parts. These congregations, which we may be apt to call heathenish (though in reality never known among the politer heathens) are, in our Christian nation, unconcernedly allowed and tolerated as no way injurious to religious interests, whatever effect they may be found to have on national manners, humanity, and civil life. Of such indulgences as these we hear no complaints. Nor are any assemblies, though of the most barbarous and enormous kind, so offensive, it seems, to men of zeal, as religious assemblies of a different fashion or habit from their own.

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[1] Treatise III. part ii. §§ 1, 2, 3.

[2] Treatise III. part ii. § 3.

I am sorry to say that, though in the many parts of poetry our attempts have been high and noble, yet in general the taste of wit and letters lies much upon a level with what relates to our stage.

I can readily allow to our British genius what was allowed to the Roman heretofore :—

> Natura sublimis et acer :
> Nam spirat tragicum satis et feliciter audet.[1]

But then I must add too, that the excessive indulgence and favour shown to our authors, on account of what their mere genius and flowing vein afford, has rendered them intolerably supine, conceited, and admirers of themselves. The public having once suffered them to take the ascendant, they become, like flattered princes, impatient of contradiction or advice. They think it a disgrace to be criticised, even by a friend, or to reform at his desire what they themselves are fully convinced is negligent and uncorrect.

> Sed turpem putat in scriptis metuitque lituram.[2]

The *limae labor*[3] is the great grievance with our countrymen. An English author would be all genius. He would reap the fruits of art, but without study, pains, or application. He thinks it necessary, indeed (lest his learning should be called in question), to show the world that he errs knowingly against the rules of art. And for this reason, whatever piece he publishes at any time, he seldom fails, in some prefixed apology, to speak in such a manner of criticism and art as may confound the ordinary reader, and prevent him from taking up a part which, should he once assume, would prove fatal to the impotent and mean performance.

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[1] ["By nature full of elevation and passion ; for he has tragic inspiration enough and happy boldness."—Hor. *Epist.* II. i. 165, 166.]

[2] [" . . . wanted or forgot
The last and greatest art, the art to blot."
Hor. *Epist.* II. i. 167, Pope's imitation.]

[3] *Ars Poet.*

'Twere to be wished, that when once our authors had considered of a model or plan, and attained the knowledge of a whole and parts;[1] when from this beginning they had pro-

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[1] *ὅλον δ' ἐστι τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτήν. ἀρχὴ δέ ἐστιν ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μὴ ἐξ ἀνάγκης μετ' ἄλλο ἐστί, μετ' ἐκεῖνο δ' ἕτερον πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ γίνεσθαι. τίλευτὴ δὲ τοὐναντίον ὃ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν. μέσον δὲ ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνο ἕτερον.* [" A whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow on anything by necessity, but after which something else naturally is or arises. On the contrary, an end is that which naturally follows on something else, either of necessity or as a rule, while it is followed by nothing. A middle is that which itself follows on something else, and has something following on it."—Arist. *De poet.* ch. 7.] And in the following chapter, *μῦθος δ' ἐστὶν εἷς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἕνα ᾖ*, etc. [" Unity of plot is not, as some people think, secured by having unity of hero."]

Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.

[" Let it be what you will, provided only it be consistent and uniform." Hor. *De arte poet.* 23.] See Treatise II. part iv. § 3.

'Tis an infallible proof of the want of just integrity in every writing, from the epopee or heroic poem down to the familiar epistle or slightest essay, either in verse or prose, if every several part or portion fits not its proper place so exactly that the least transposition would be impracticable. Whatever is episodic, though perhaps it be a whole and in itself entire, yet being inserted as a part in a work of greater length, it must appear only in its due place. And that place alone can be called its due one which alone befits it. If there be any passage in the middle or end which might have stood in the beginning, or any in the beginning which might have stood as well in the middle or end, there is properly in such a piece neither beginning, middle, or end. 'Tis a mere rhapsody, not a work. And the ceeded to morals, and the knowledge of what is called poetic manners and truth;[1] when they had learnt to reject false

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more it assumes the air or appearance of a real work, the more ridiculous it becomes. See above, p. 171, and Treatise II. part iv. § 3.

[1] Respicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatorem et veras hinc ducere voces.

["I shall bid the well-trained imitator look to the pattern which life presents, and there learn the language of reality."—Hor. *De arte poet.* 317, 318.] The chief of ancient critics, we know, extols Homer above all things, for understanding how "to lie in perfection," as the passage shows which we have cited above, Treatise III. part iii. § 3. His lies, according to that master's opinion, and the judgment of many of the gravest and most venerable writers, were in themselves the justest moral truths, and exhibitive of the best doctrine and instruction in life and manners. It may be asked, perhaps, "how comes the poet, then, to draw no single pattern of the kind, no perfect character, in either of his heroic pieces?" I answer, that should he attempt to do it he would as a poet be preposterous and false. 'Tis not the possible but the probable and likely which must be the poet's guide in manners. By this he wins attention and moves the conscious reader or spectator, who judges best from within, by what he naturally feels and experiences in his own heart. The perfection of virtue is from long art and management, self-control, and, as it were, force on nature. But the common auditor or spectator, who seeks pleasure only, and loves to engage his passion by view of other passion and emotion, comprehends little of the restraints, allays, and corrections which form this new and artificial creature. For such indeed is the truly virtuous man, whose art, though ever so natural in itself or justly founded in reason and nature, is an improvement far beyond the common stamp or known character of human kind. And thus the completely virtuous and perfect character is unpoetical and false. Effects must not appear where causes must necessarily remain unknown and incomprehensible. A hero without passion is in poetry as absurd as a hero without life or action. Now if passion be allowed, passionate action must ensue. The same heroic genius and seeming magnanimity which transport us when beheld, are naturally transporting in the lives and manners of the great who are described to us. And thus the able designer who feigns in behalf of truth and draws his characters after the moral rule, fails not to discover Nature's propensity, and assigns to these high spirits their proper exorbitancy and inclination to exceed in that tone or species of passion which constitutes the eminent or shining part of each poetical character. The passion of an thought, embarrassing and mixed metaphors, the ridiculous point in comedy, and the false sublime and bombast in heroic, they would at last have some regard to numbers, harmony, and

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Achilles is towards that glory which is acquired by arms and personal valour. In favour of this character we forgive the generous youth his excess of ardour in the field, and his resentment when injured and provoked in council and by his allies. The passion of an Ulysses is towards that glory which is acquired by prudence, wisdom, and ability in affairs. 'Tis in favour of this character that we forgive him his subtle, crafty, and deceitful air; since the intriguing spirit, the over-reaching manner, and over-refinement of art and policy are as naturally incident to the experienced and thorough politician as sudden resentment, indiscreet and rash behaviour, to the open undesigning character of a warlike youth. The gigantic force and military toil of an Ajax would not be so easily credible or engaging, but for the honest simplicity of his nature and the heaviness of his parts and genius. For strength of body being so often noted by us as unattended with equal parts and strength of mind, when we see this natural effect expressed and find our secret and malicious kind of reasoning confirmed on this hand, we yield to any hyperbole of our poet on the other. He has afterwards his full scope and liberty of enlarging and exceeding in the peculiar virtue and excellence of his hero. He may lie splendidly, raise wonder, and be as astonishing as he pleases. Everything will be allowed him in return for this frank allowance. Thus the tongue of a Nestor may work prodigies, whilst the accompanying allays of a rhetorical fluency and aged experience are kept in view. An Agamemnon may be admired as a noble and wise chief, whilst a certain princely haughtiness, a stiffness and stately carriage natural to the character, are represented in his person and noted in their ill effects. For thus the excesses of every character are by the poet redressed. And the misfortunes naturally attending such excesses being justly applied, our passions, whilst in the strongest manner engaged and moved, are in the wholesomest and most effectual manner corrected and purged. Were a man to form himself by one single pattern or original, however perfect, he would himself be a mere copy. But whilst he draws from various models, he is original, natural, and unaffected. We see in outward carriage and behaviour how ridiculous any one becomes who imitates another, be he ever so graceful. They are mean spirits who love to copy merely, nothing is agreeable or natural but what is original. Our manners, like our faces, though ever so beautiful, must differ in their beauty. An over-regularity is next to a deformity. And in a poem (whether epic or dramatic) a coman ear,[1] and correct, as far as possible, the harsh sounds of our language, in poetry at least, if not in prose.

But so much are our British poets taken up in seeking out that monstrous ornament which we call rhyme,[2] that 'tis no

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plete and perfect character is the greatest monster, and of all poetic fictions not only the least engaging but the least moral and improving. Thus much by way of remark upon poetical truth and the just fiction or artful lying of the able poet, according to the judgment of the master-critic. What Horace expresses of the same lying virtue is of an easier sense, and needs no explanation.

Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet;
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

["Such is his use of fiction, such his combination of true and false, that the middle does not clash with the beginning or the end with the middle." —Hor. *De arte poet.* 151, 152.]

The same may be observed not only in heroic draughts, but in the inferior characters of comedy.

Quam similis uterque est sui!

["How like himself each man acts"!—Terence, *Phorm.* III. ii. 16.]

See Treatise I. § 1; Treatise II. part iv. § 3; Treatise III. part iii. § 3, in the notes at the end.

[1] Treatise III. part ii. § 1.

[2] The reader, if curious in these matters, may see Is. Vossius *De viribus rhythmi*, and what he says withal of ancient music, and the degrees by which they surpass us moderns (as has been demonstrated by late mathematicians of our nation), contrary to a ridiculous notion some have had, that because in this, as in all other arts, the ancients studied simplicity and affected it as the highest perfection in their performances, they were therefore ignorant of parts and symphony. Against this, Is. Vossius, amongst other authors, cites the ancient Peripatetic περὶ κόσμου at the beginning of his fifth chapter. To which he might have added another passage in chapter vi. The suitableness of this ancient author's thought to what has been often advanced in the philosophical parts of these volumes, concerning the universal symmetry or union of the whole, may make it excusable if we add here the two passages together, in their inimitable original. ἴσως δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων ἡ φύσις γλίχεται, καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἀποτελεῖν τὸ σύμφωνον, οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει τὸ ἄρρεν συνήγαγε πρὸς τὸ θῆλυ, καὶ οὐχ ἑκάτερον πρὸς τὸ ὁμόφυλον, καὶ τὴν πρώτην ὁμόνοιαν διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων συνῆψεν, οὐ διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων. ἔοικε δὲ καὶ ἡ τέχνη τὴν φύσιν μιμουμένη τοῦτο ποιεῖν. ζωγραφία μὲν γάρ, λευκῶν τε καὶ μελάνων, ὠχρῶν τε καὶ ἐρυθρῶν χρωμάτων ἐγκερασαμένη φύσεις τὰς εἰκόνας τοῖς

wonder if other ornaments and real graces are unthought of and left unattempted. However, since in some parts of poetry (especially in the dramatic) we have been so happy as to triumph over this barbarous taste, 'tis unaccountable that our poets, who from this privilege ought to undertake some further refinements, should remain still upon the same level as before. 'Tis a shame to our authors that, in their elegant style and metred prose, there should not be found a peculiar grace and harmony

προηγουμένοις ἀπετέλεσε συμφώνους. μουσικὴ δέ, ὀξεῖς ἅμα καὶ βαρεῖς, μακρούς τε καὶ βραχεῖς φθόγγους μίξασα, ἐν διαφόροις φωναῖς, μίαν ἀπετέλεσεν ἁρμονίαν. γραμματικὴ δέ, ἐκ φωνηέντων καὶ ἀφώνων γραμμάτων κρᾶσιν ποιησαμένη, τὴν ὅλην τέχνην ἀπ' αὐτῶν συνεστήσατο. ταὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο ἦν καὶ τὸ παρὰ τῷ σκοτεινῷ λεγόμενον Ἡρακλείτῳ. συνάψειας οὖλα καὶ οὐχὶ οὖλα, συμφερόμενον καὶ διαφερόμενον, συνᾷδον καὶ διᾷδον, καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἕν, καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα. And in the following passage, *μία δὲ ἐκ πάντων ἁρμονία συνᾳδόντων καὶ χορευόντων κατὰ τὸν οὐρανόν, ἐξ ἑνός τε γίνεται, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἀπολήγει. κόσμον δ' ἐτύμως τὸ σύμπαν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ἀκοσμίαν ὀνομάσαις ἄν. καθάπερ δὲ ἐν χορῷ κορυφαίου κατάρξαντος, συνεπηχεῖ πᾶς ὁ χορὸς ἀνδρῶν, ἔσθ' ὅτε καὶ γυναικῶν, ἐν διαφόροις φωναῖς ὀξυτέραις καὶ βαρυτέραις, μίαν ἁρμονίαν ἐμμελῆ κεραννύντων, οὕτως ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ τὸ σύμπαν διέποντος Θεοῦ.* [" And perhaps Nature wants opposites too, and wants to make harmony out of them, not out of similars ; as, for instance, she brings the male to the female and not each of these to one of his or her own sex ; and she made the first concord by means of opposites, not similars. Art too seems to do this in imitation of nature. For painting, by combining the natures of black and white, yellow and red, makes its representations correspond with their types. Music, uniting sharp and grave notes, and long and short syllables, makes one harmony among different sounds. Grammar too, bringing together vowels and consonants, builds her whole art upon them. This is the very point which was given forth by Heraclitus the Obscure, who said, " combine wholes and parts, that which is dispersed and that which is united, that which makes discord and that which is in unison, and out of all comes one and out of one comes all." . . . There is one harmony arising from all the bodies which sound together and circle in the sky, and it springs from one thing and ends in one. We might with correct etymology call the universe an order, but not a disorder. And, just as in a chorus, when the leader has led off, all the band of men (and sometimes women) joins in, making by combination of different voices, higher and lower, one harmony in unison, so it is also in the case of the Deity who controls the universe."—Ps.-Arist. *De Mundo*, cc. 5, 6.] See Treatise v. part i. § 3 ; and above, pp. 268-270, in the notes.

resulting from a more natural and easy disengagment of their periods, and from a careful avoiding the encounter of the shocking consonants and jarring sounds to which our language is so unfortunately subject.

They have of late, 'tis true, reformed in some measure the gouty joints and darning-work of whereunto's, whereby's, thereof's, therewith's, and the rest of this kind, by which complicated periods are so curiously strung or hooked-on one to another, after the long-spun manner of the bar or pulpit. But to take into consideration no real accent or cadency of words, no sound or measure of syllables, to put together, at one time, a set of compounds of the longest Greek or Latin termination, and at another to let whole verses, and those too of our heroic and longest sort, pass currently in monosyllables, is, methinks, no slender negligence. If single verses at the head, or in the most emphatical places of the most considerable works can admit of such a structure and pass for truly harmonious and poetical in this negligent form, I see no reason why more verses than one or two of the same formation should not be as well admitted, or why an uninterrupted succession of these well-strung monosyllables might not be allowed to clatter after one another, like the hammers of a paper mill, without any breach of music or prejudice to the harmony of our language. But if persons who have gone no farther than a smith's anvil to gain an ear are yet likely, on fair trial, to find a plain defect in these ten-monosyllable heroics, it would follow, methinks, that even a prose author, who attempts to write politely, should endeavour to confine himself within those bounds, which can never without breach of harmony be exceeded in any just metre or agreeable pronunciation.

Thus have I ventured to arraign the authority of those self-privileged writers who would exempt themselves from criticism and save their ill-acquired reputation by the decrial of an art on which the cause and interest of wit and letters absolutely depend. Be it they themselves, or their great patrons in their behalf, who would thus arbitrarily support the credit of ill writings, the attempt, I hope, will prove unsuccessful. Be they moderns or ancients, foreigners or natives, ponderous and austere writers or airy and of the humorous kind, whoever takes refuge here or seeks protection hence, whoever joins his party or interest to this cause, it appears from the very fact and endeavour alone that there is just ground to suspect some insufficiency or imposture at the bottom. And on this account the reader, if he be wise, will the rather redouble his application and industry to examine the merit of his assuming author. If, as reader and judge, he dare once assert that liberty to which we have shown him justly entitled, he will not easily be threatened or ridiculed out of the use of his examining capacity and native privilege of criticism.

'Twas to this art, so well understood and practised heretofore, that the wise ancients owed whatever was consummate and perfect in their productions. 'Tis to the same art we owe the recovery of letters in these latter ages. To this alone we must ascribe the recognition of ancient manuscripts, the discovery of what is spurious and the discernment of whatever is genuine of those venerable remains which have passed through such dark periods of ignorance and raised us to the improvements we now make in every science. 'Tis to this art that even the sacred authors themselves owe their highest purity and correctness. So sacred ought the art itself to be esteemed, when from its supplies alone is formed that judicious and learned strength by which the defenders of our holy religion are able so successfully to refute the heathens, Jews, sectarians, heretics, and other enemies or opposers of our primitive and ancient faith.

But having thus, after our author's example, asserted the use of criticism in all literate works, from the main frame or plan of every writing down to the minutest particle, we may now proceed to exercise this art upon our author himself, and by his own rules examine him in this his last treatise, reserving still to ourselves the same privilege of variation and excursion into other subjects, the same episodic liberty and right of wandering which we have maintained in the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER II

Generation and succession of our national and modern wit—Manners of the proprietors—Corporation and joint stock—Statute against criticism—A coffee-house committee—Mr Bays—Other Bays' in divinity—Censure of our author's dialogue piece, and of the manner of dialogue writing used by reverend wits.

According to the common course of practice in our age, we seldom see the character of writer and that of critic united in the same person. There is, I know, a certain species of authors who subsist wholly by the criticising or commenting practice upon others, and can appear in no other form besides what this employment authorises them to assume. They have no original character or first part, but wait for something which may be called a work in order to graft upon it, and come in for shares at second hand.

The penmen of this capacity and degree are, from their function and employment, distinguished by the title of answerers. For it happens in the world that there are readers of a genius and size just fitted to these answering authors. These, if they teach them nothing else, will teach them, they think, to criticise. And though the new practising critics are of a sort unlikely ever to understand any original book or writing, they can understand or at least remember and quote the subsequent reflections, flouts, and jeers which may accidentally be made on such a piece. Wherever a gentleman of this sort happens at any time to be in company, you shall no sooner hear a new book spoken of, than 'twill be asked, "Who has answered it?" or, "When is there an answer to come out?" Now the answer, as our gentleman knows, must needs be newer than the book; and the newer a thing is, the more fashionable still and the genteeler the subject of discourse. For this the bookseller knows how to fit our gentleman to a nicety, for he has commonly an answer ready bespoke, and perhaps finished by the time his new book comes abroad. And 'tis odds but our fashionable gentleman, who takes both together, may read the latter first and drop the other for good and all.

But of these answering wits, and the manner of rejoinders and reiterate replies, we have said what is sufficient in a former Miscellany.[1] We need only remark in general, "that 'tis necessary a writing critic should understand how to write. And though every writer is not bound to show himself in the capacity of critic, every writing critic is bound to show himself capable of being a writer. For if he be apparently impotent in this latter kind, he is to be denied all title or character in the other."

To censure merely what another person writes; to twitch, snap, snub-up or banter; to torture sentences and phrases, turn a few expressions into ridicule, or write what is nowadays called an answer to any piece, is not sufficient to constitute what is properly esteemed a writer or author in due form. For this reason, though there are many answerers seen abroad, there are few or no critics or satirists. But whatever may be the state of controversy in our religion or politic concerns, 'tis certain that in the mere literate world affairs are managed with a better understanding between the principal parties concerned. The writers or authors in possession have an easier time than any ministry or religious party which is uppermost. They have found a way, by decrying all criticism in general, to get rid of their dissenters, and prevent all pretences to further reformation in their state. The critic is made to appear distinct and of another species, wholly different from the writer. None who have a genius for writing and can perform with any success are presumed so ill-natured or illiberal as to endeavour to signalise themselves in criticism.

'Tis not difficult, however, to imagine why this practical difference between writer and critic has been so generally established amongst us as to make the provinces seem wholly distinct and irreconcilable. The forward wits who, without waiting their due time or performing their requisite studies, start up in the world as authors, having with little pains or judgment and by the strength of fancy merely acquired a name with mankind, can on no account afterwards submit to a decrial or disparagement of those raw works to which they owed their early character and distinction. Ill would it fare with them, indeed, if on these tenacious terms they should venture upon criticism, or offer to move that spirit which would infallibly give such disturbance to their established title.

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[1] Viz. *supra, Misc.* i. ch. ii.

Now we may consider that in our nation, and especially in our present age, whilst wars, debates, and public convulsions turn our minds so wholly upon business and affairs, the better geniuses being in a manner necessarily involved in the active sphere, on which the general eye of mankind is so strongly fixed, there must remain in the theatre of wit a sufficient vacancy of place, and the quality of actors upon that stage must of consequence be very easily attainable, and at a low price of ingenuity or understanding.

The persons, therefore, who are in possession of the prime parts in this deserted theatre, being suffered to maintain their ranks and stations in full ease, have naturally a good agreement and understanding with their fellow-wits. Being indebted to the times for this happiness, that with so little industry or capacity they have been able to serve the nation with wit, and supply the place of real dispensers and ministers of the muses' treasures, they must necessarily, as they have any love for themselves or fatherly affection for their works, conspire with one another to preserve their common interest of indolence and justify their remissness, uncorrectness, insipidness, and downright ignorance of all literate art or just poetic beauty.

Magna inter molles concordia.[1]

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[1] Juven. *Sat.* ii. 47. ["Great is the unity of the effeminate."]

For this reason you see them mutually courteous and benevolent, gracious and obliging beyond measure; complimenting one another interchangeably, at the head of their works, in recommendatory verses, or in separate panegyrics, essays, and fragments of poetry; such as in the Miscellaneous Collections (our yearly retail of wit) we see curiously compacted and accommodated to the relish of the world. Here the *tyrocinium* of geniuses is annually displayed. Here, if you think fit, you may make acquaintance with the young offspring of wits as they come up gradually under the old; with due courtship and homage paid to those high predecessors of fame in hope of being one day admitted, by turn, into the noble order and made wits by patent and authority.

This is the young fry which you may see busily surrounding the grown poet or chief playhouse author,[1] at a coffee-house. They are his guards, ready to take up arms for him, if by some presumptuous critic he is at any time attacked. They are indeed the very shadows of their immediate predecessor, and represent the same features, with some small alteration perhaps for the worse. They are sure to aim at nothing above or beyond their master, and would on no account give him the least jealousy of their aspiring to any degree or order of writing above him. From hence that harmony and reciprocal esteem, which, on such a bottom as this, cannot fail of being perfectly well established among our poets: the age, meanwhile, being after this manner hopefully provided and secure of a constant and like succession of meritorious wits, in every kind!

If by chance a man of sense, unapprised of the authority of these high powers, should venture to accost the gentlemen of this fraternity, at some coffee-house committee, whilst they were taken up in mutual admiration and the usual praise of their national and co-temporary wits, 'tis possible he might be treated with some civility, whilst he inquired, for satisfaction sake, into the beauties of those particular works so unanimously extolled. But should he presume to ask in general, "Why is our epic or dramatic, our essay or common prose no better executed?" Or, "Why, in particular, does such or such a reputed wit write so incorrectly, and with so little regard to justness of thought or language?" The answer would presently be given, "That we Englishmen are not tied up to such rigid rules as those of the ancient Grecian or modern French critics."

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[1] [In view of the references to "ten-monosyllable heroics" above (p. 322), and to "Mr. Bays" in the sequel, it is probable that here also Dryden is aimed at. As he died in 1700, there is room for a presumption that this portion of the *Miscellanies* had been written before that date.]

"Be it so, gentlemen! 'Tis your good pleasure. Nor ought any one to dispute it with you. You are masters, no doubt, in your own country. But, gentlemen, the question here is not what your authority may be over your own writers: you may have them of what fashion or size of wit you please, and allow them to entertain you at the rate you think sufficient and satisfactory. But can you, by your good pleasure, or the approbation of your highest patrons, make that to be either wit or sense, which would otherwise have been bombast and contradiction? If your poets are still Mr. Bays',[1] and your prose authors Sir Rogers, without offering at a better manner, must it follow that the manner itself is good or the wit genuine? What say you, gentlemen, to this new piece? Let us examine these lines which you call shining! This string of sentences which you call clever! This pile of metaphors which you call sublime! Are you unwilling, gentlemen, to stand the test? Do you despise the examination?

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[1] To see the incorrigibleness of our poets in their pedantic manner, their vanity, defiance of criticism, their rhodomontade and poetical bravado, we need only turn to our famous poet-laureate (the very Mr. Bays himself) in one of his latest and most valued pieces, writ many years after the ingenious author of the *Rehearsal* had drawn his picture. "I have been listening" (says our poet in his preface to *Don Sebastian*) "what objections had been made against the conduct of the play, but found them all so trivial, that if I should name them a true critic would imagine that I played booty. . . . Some are pleased to say the writing is dull. But aetatem habet, de se loquatur. Others, that the double poison is unnatural. Let the common received opinion, and *Ausonius* his famous epigram, answer that. Lastly, a more ignorant sort of creatures than either of the former maintain that the character of Dorax is not only unnatural but inconsistent with itself. Let them read the play and think again. A longer reply is what these cavillers deserve not. But I will give them and their fellows to understand, that the Earl of —— was pleased to read the tragedy twice over before it was acted, and did me the favour to send me word that I had

"Sir! since you are pleased to take this liberty with us, may we presume to ask you a question? Oh, gentlemen! as many as you please: I shall be highly honoured. Why then, pray sir! inform us whether you have ever writ? Very often, gentlemen, especially on a post-night. But have you writ, for instance, sir, a play, a song, an essay, or a paper, as, by way of eminence, the current pieces of our weekly wits are generally styled? Something of this kind I may perhaps, gentlemen, have attempted, though without publishing my work. But pray, gentlemen, what is my writing or not writing to the question in hand? Only this, sir, and you may fairly take our words for it, that whenever you publish you will find the town against you. Your piece will infallibly be condemned. So let it. But for what reason, gentlemen? I am sure you never saw the piece.

written beyond any of my former plays, and that he was displeased anything should be cut away. If I have not reason to prefer his single judgment to a whole faction, let the world be judge: for the opposition is the same with that of Lucan's hero against an army, concurrere bellum atque virum. I think I may modestly conclude, etc."

Thus he goes on to the very end in the self-same strain. Who, after this, can ever say of the *Rehearsal* author that his picture of our poet was over-charged, or the national humour wrong described?

[Shaftesbury might have mentioned that Dryden in his closing paragraph writes, "At least, if I appear too positive, I am growing old, and thereby in possession of some experience, which men in years will always assume for a right of talking." He had, besides, been deprived of his offices of poet-laureate and historiographer-royal at the Revolution, and being forced to return to play-writing for a livelihood, after having given it up for eight years, saw in the attacks on *Don Sebastian* an ungenerous hostility to himself. The play was published in 1690, his fifty-ninth year.]

No, sir. But you are a critic. And we know by certain experience that, when a critic writes according to rule and method, he is sure never to hit the English taste. Did not Mr. Rymer, who criticised our English tragedy, write a sorry one of his own? If he did, gentlemen, 'twas his own fault, not to know his genius better. But is his criticism the less just on this account? If a musician performs his part well in the hardest symphonies he must necessarily know the notes and understand the rules of harmony and music. But must a man, therefore, who has an ear, and has studied the rules of music, of necessity have a voice or hand? Can no one possibly judge a fiddle but who is himself a fiddler? Can no one judge a picture but who is himself a layer of colours?"

Thus far our rational gentleman perhaps might venture before his coffee-house audience. Had I been at his elbow to prompt him as a friend, I should hardly have thought fit to remind him of any thing further. On the contrary, I should have rather taken him aside to inform him of this cabal and established corporation of wit, of their declared aversion to criticism, and of their known laws and statutes in that case made and provided. I should have told him, in short, that learned arguments would be misspent on such as these, and that he would find little success, though he should ever so plainly demonstrate to the gentlemen of this size of wit and understanding, "that the greatest masters of art, in every kind of writing, were eminent in the critical practice." But that they really were so, witness, among the ancients, their greatest philosophers,[1] whose critical pieces lie intermixed with their profound philosophical works and other politer tracts ornamentally writ[2] for public use. Witness, in history and rhetoric, Isocrates, Dionysius Halicarnasseus, Plutarch, and the corrupt Lucian himself; the only one perhaps of these authors whom our gentlemen may, in some modern translation, have looked into with any curiosity or delight. To these among the Romans we may add Cicero, Varro, Horace, Quintilian, Pliny, and many more.

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[1] Viz. Plato, Aristotle. See in particular the *Phaedrus* of the former, where an entire piece of the orator Lysias is criticised in form.

[2] The distinction of treatises was into the ἀκροαματικοί and ἐξωτερικοί.

Among the moderns, a Boileau and a Corneille are sufficient precedents in the case before us. They applied their criticism with just severity, even to their own works. This indeed is a manner hardly practicable with the poets of our own nation. It would be unreasonable to expect of them that they should bring such measures in use as, being applied to their works, would discover them to be wholly deformed and disproportionable. 'Tis no wonder, therefore, if we have so little of this critical genius extant to guide us in our taste. 'Tis no wonder if what is generally current in this kind lies in a manner buried, and in disguise under burlesque, as particularly in the witty comedy [1] of a noble author of this last age. To the shame, however, of our professed wits and enterprisers in the higher spheres of poetry, it may be observed that they have not wanted good advice and instruction of the graver kind from as high a hand in respect of quality and character; since one of the justest of our modern poems, and so confessed even by our poets themselves, is a short criticism, an Art of Poetry; [2] by which, if they themselves were to be judged, they must in general appear no better than mere bunglers, and void of all true sense and knowledge in their art. But if in reality both critic and poet, confessing the justice of these rules of art, can afterwards in practice condemn and approve, perform and judge in a quite different manner from what they acknowledge just and true; it plainly shows that though perhaps we are not indigent in wit, we want what is of more consequence, and can alone raise wit to any dignity or worth, even plain honesty, manners, and a sense of that moral truth on which (as has been often expressed in these volumes)[1] poetic truth and beauty must naturally depend.

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[1] The *Rehearsal.* See Treatise III. part ii. § 2; and just above, p. 328.

[2] Or *Essay on Poetry,* by J. Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire. [Note in small ed. of 1733.]

> Qui didicit, patriae quid debeat et quid amicis,
> Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes,
> Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium,
> . . . ille profecto
> Reddere personae scit convenientia cuique.[2]

As for this species of morality which distinguishes the civil offices of life and describes each becoming personage or character in this scene, so necessary it is for the poet and polite author to be apprised of it, that even the divine himself may with juster pretence be exempted from the knowledge of this sort. The composer of religious discourses has the advantage of that higher scene of mystery, which is above the level of human commerce. 'Tis not so much his concern or business to be agreeable. And often when he would endeavour it, he becomes more than ordinarily displeasing. His theatre and that of the polite world are very different, insomuch that in a reverend author or declaimer of this sort, we naturally excuse the ignorance of ordinary decorum, in what relates to the affairs of our inferior temporal world. But for the poet or genteel writer, who is of this world merely, 'tis a different case. He must be perfect in this moral science. We can easily bear the loss of indifferent poetry or essay. A good bargain it were, could we get rid of every moderate performance in this kind. But were we obliged to hear only excellent sermons, and to read nothing in the way of devotion which was not well writ, it might possibly go hard with many Christian people who are at present such attentive auditors and readers. Established pastors have a right to be indifferent. But voluntary discourses and attempters in wit or poetry are as intolerable, when they are indifferent, as either fiddlers or painters:—

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[1] Viz. Treatise III. part i. § 3; part ii. § 3; part iii. § 3. So above, p. 318, and in the notes.

[2] ["The man who has learned what are his duties to his fatherland or to his friends; what affection is due to a father, a brother, or a guest; what is the duty of a senator, what of a juryman, . . . he to be sure knows how to find suitable language for each character."—Hor. *De arte poet.*, 312-316.]

> Poterat duci quia coena sine istis.[1]

Other Bays' and poetasters may be lawfully baited, though we patiently submit to our Bays' in divinity.

Had the author of our subject treatises[2] considered thoroughly of these literate affairs, and found how the interest of wit stood at present in our nation, he would have had so much regard surely to his own interest, as never to have writ unless either in the single capacity of mere critic, or that of author in form. If he had resolved never to produce a regular or legitimate piece, he might pretty safely have writ on still after the rate of his first volume and mixed manner. He might have been as critical, as satirical, or as full of raillery as he had pleased. But to come afterwards as a grave actor upon the stage, and expose himself to criticism in his turn, by giving us a work or two in form, after the regular manner of composition, as we see in his second volume; this I think was no extraordinary proof of his judgment or ability, in what related to his own credit and advantage.

One of these formal pieces (the Inquiry, already examined) we have found to be wholly after the manner which in one of his critical pieces he calls the methodic. But his next piece (the Moralists, which we have now before us) must, according to his own rules,[3] be reckoned as an undertaking of greater weight. 'Tis not only at the bottom as systematical, didactic, and preceptive as that other piece of formal structure; but it assumes withal another garb and more fashionable turn of wit. It conceals what is scholastical under the appearance of a polite work. It aspires to dialogue, and carries with it not only those poetic features of the pieces anciently called mimes; but it attempts to unite the several personages and characters in one action or story, within a determinate compass of time, regularly divided and drawn into different and proportioned scenes; and this, too, with variety of styles; the simple, comic, rhetorical, and even the poetic or sublime, such as is the aptest to run into enthusiasm and extravagance. So much is our author, by virtue of this piece,[1] a poet in due form, and by a more apparent claim than if he had writ a play or dramatic piece in as regular a manner, at least, as any known at present on our stage.

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[1] ["Because a dinner could be carried on without them."—Hor. *De arte poet.*, 376.

[2] *Supra, Misc.* iii. ch. i.; iv. ch. i.

[3] Treatise III. part i. § 3; part ii. § 2.

It appears, indeed, that as high as our author in his critical capacity would pretend to carry the refined manner and accurate simplicity of the ancients, he dares not, in his own model and principal performance, attempt to unite his philosophy in one solid and uniform body, nor carry on his argument in one continued chain or thread. Here our author's timorousness is visible. In the very plan or model of his work, he is apparently put to a hard shift to contrive how or with what probability he might introduce men of any note or fashion, reasoning expressly and purposely,[1] without play or trifling, for two or three hours together on mere philosophy and morals. He finds these subjects (as he confesses) so wide of common conversation, and by long custom so appropriated to the school, the university chair or pulpit, that he thinks it hardly safe or practicable to treat of them elsewhere or in a different tone. He is forced therefore to raise particular machines, and constrain his principal characters in order to carry a better face and bear himself out against the appearance of pedantry. Thus his gentleman philosopher Theocles, before he enters into his real character, becomes a feigned preacher. And even when his real character comes on, he hardly dares stand it out; but to deal the better with his sceptic friend he falls again to personating, and takes up the humour of the poet and enthusiast. Palemon the man of quality, and who is first introduced as speaker in the piece, must, for fashion-sake, appear in love, and under a kind of melancholy produced by some misadventures in the world. How else should he be supposed so serious? Philocles his friend (an airy gentleman of the world and a thorough *railleur*[2]) must have a home charge upon him, and feel the anger of his grave friend before he can be supposed grave

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[1] That he is conscious of this, we may gather from that line or two of advertisement, which stands at the beginning of his first edition. "As for the characters and incidents, they are neither wholly feigned," says he, "nor wholly true; but according to the liberty allowed in the way of dialogue, the principal matters are founded upon truth, and the rest as near resembling as may be. 'Tis a sceptic recites, and the hero of the piece passes for an enthusiast. If a perfect character be wanting, 'tis the same case here as with the poets in some of their best pieces. And this surely is a sufficient warrant for the author of a philosophical romance." Thus our author himself, who to conceal, however, his strict imitation of the ancient poetic dialogue, has prefixed an auxiliary title to his work, and given it the surname of Rhapsody. As if it were merely of that essay or mixed kind of works, which come abroad with an affected air of negligence and irregularity. But whatever our author may have affected in his title page, 'twas so little his intention to write after that model of incoherent workmanship, that it appears to be sorely against his will if this dialogue piece of his has not the just character and correct form of those ancient poems described. He would gladly have constituted one single action and time, suitable to the just simplicity of those dramatic works. And this, one would think, was easy enough for him to have

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done. He needed only to have brought his first speakers immediately into action, and saved the narrative or recitative part of Philocles to Palemon, by producing them as speaking personages upon his stage. The scene all along might have been the park. From the early evening to the late hour of night, that the two gallants withdrew to their town apartments, there was sufficient time for the narrator Philocles to have recited the whole transaction of the second and third part, which would have stood throughout as it now does; only at the conclusion, when the narrative or recitative part had ceased, the simple and direct dialogue would have again returned to grace the exit. By this means the temporal as well as local unity of the piece had been preserved. Nor had our author been necessitated to commit that anachronism, of making his first part in order to be last in time.

[1] Treatise II. part i. § 3.

[2] [Shaftesbury wrote "Raillyer."]

enough to enter into a philosophical discourse. A quarter of an hour's reading must serve to represent an hour or two's debate. And a new scene presenting itself, ever and anon, must give refreshment, it seems, to the faint reader, and remind him of the characters and business going on.

'Tis in the same view that we miscellanarian authors, being fearful of the natural lassitude and satiety of our indolent reader, have prudently betaken ourselves to the ways of chapters and contents, that as the reader proceeds, by frequent intervals of repose contrived on purpose for him, he may from time to time be advertised of what is yet to come, and be tempted thus to renew his application.

Thus in our modern plays we see, almost in every other leaf, descriptions or illustrations of the action, not in the poem itself, or in the mouth of the actors, but by the poet in his own person; in order, as appears, to help out a defect of the text by a kind of marginal note or comment, which renders these pieces of a mixed kind between the narrative and dramatic. 'Tis in this fashionable style or manner of dumb show that the reader finds the action of the piece more amazingly expressed than he possibly could by the lines of the drama itself, where the parties alone are suffered to be speakers.

'Tis out of the same regard to ease, both in respect of writer and reader, that we see long characters and descriptions at the head of most dramatic pieces, to inform us of the relations, kindred, interest, and designs of the dramatis personae; this being of the highest importance to the reader, that he may the better understand the plot, and find out the principal characters and incidents of the piece, which otherwise could not possibly discover themselves as they are read in their due order. And to do justice to our play-readers, they seldom fail to humour our poets in this respect, and read over the characters with strict application, as a sort of grammar or key, before they enter on the piece itself. I know not whether they would do so much for any philosophical piece in the world. Our author seems very much to question it, and has therefore made that part easy enough which relates to the distinction of his characters, by making use of the narrative manner. Though he had done as well, perhaps, not to have gone out of the natural plain way on this account. For with those to whom such philosophical subjects are agreeable, it could be thought no laborious task to give the same attention to characters in dialogue as is given at the first entrance by every reader to the easiest play composed of fewest and plainest personages. But for those who read these subjects with mere supineness and indifference, they will as much begrudge the pains of attending to the characters thus particularly pointed out as if they had only been discernible by inference and deduction from the mouth of the speaking parties themselves.

More reasons are given by our author[1] himself for his avoiding the direct way of dialogue, which at present lies so low, and is used only now and then in our party-pamphlets or new-fashioned theological essays. For of late, it seems, the manner has been introduced into Church controversy, with an attempt of raillery and humour, as a more successful method of dealing with heresy and infidelity. The burlesque divinity grows mightily in vogue. And the cried-up answers to heterodox discourses are generally such as are written in drollery or with resemblance of the facetious and humorous language of conversation.

Joy to the reverend authors who can afford to be thus gay, and condescend to correct us in this lay-wit. The advances they make in behalf of piety and manners by such a popular style are doubtless found upon experience to be very considerable. As these reformers are nicely qualified to hit the air of breeding and gentility, they will in time, no doubt, refine their manner and improve this jocular method, to the edification of the polite world, who have been so long seduced by the way of raillery and wit. They may do wonders by their comic muse, and may thus, perhaps, find means to laugh gentlemen into their religion who have unfortunately been laughed out of it. For what reason is there to suppose that orthodoxy should not be able to laugh as agreeably, and with as much refinedness, as heresy or infidelity?

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[1] Treatise v. part i. § 1.

At present, it must be owned, the characters or personages employed by our new orthodox dialogists carry with them little proportion or coherence, and in this respect may be said to suit perfectly with that figurative metaphorical style and rhetorical manner, in which their logic and arguments are generally couched. Nothing can be more complex or multiform than their moral draughts or sketches of humanity. These, indeed, are so far from representing any particular man or order of men, that they scarce resemble anything of the kind. 'Tis by their names only that these characters are figured. Though they bear different titles and are set up to maintain contrary points, they are found, at the bottom, to be all of the same side; and, notwithstanding their seeming variance, to co-operate in the most officious manner with the author, towards the display of his own proper wit, and the establishment of his private opinion and maxims. They are indeed his very legitimate and obsequious puppets, as like real men in voice, action, and manners as those wooden or wire engines of the lower stage. Philotheus and Philatheus, Philautus and Philalethes are of one and the same order: just tallies to one another; questioning and answering in concert, and with such a sort of alternative as is known in a vulgar play, where one person lies down blindfold and presents himself, as fair as may be, to another, who by favour of the company or the assistance of his good fortune, deals his companion many a sound blow, without being once challenged, or brought into his turn of lying down.

There is the same curious mixture of chance and elegant vicissitude in the style of these mock personages of our new theological drama; with this difference only, "that after the poor phantom or shadow of an adversary has said as little for his cause as can be imagined, and given as many opens and advantages as could be desired, he lies down for good and all, and passively submits to the killing strokes of his unmerciful conqueror."

Hardly, as I conceive, will it be objected to our moralist (the author of the philosophic dialogue above) "that the personages who sustain the sceptical or objecting parts, are over-tame and tractable in their disposition." Did I perceive any such foul dealing in his piece, I should scarce think it worthy of the criticism here bestowed. For in this sort of writing, where personages are exhibited and natural conversation set in view; if characters are neither tolerably preserved nor manners with any just similitude described, there remains nothing but what is too gross and monstrous for criticism or examination.

'Twill be alleged, perhaps, in answer to what is here advanced, "that should a dialogue be wrought up to the exactness of these rules, it ought to be condemned as the worse piece, for affording the infidel or sceptic such good quarter and giving him the full advantage of his argument and wit."

But to this I reply, that either dialogue should never be attempted, or, if it be, the parties should appear natural and such as they really are. If we paint at all, we should endeavour to paint like life and draw creatures as they are knowable, in their proper shapes and better features, not in metamorphoses, not mangled, lame, distorted, awkward forms, and impotent chimeras. Atheists have their sense and wits as other men, or why is atheism so often challenged in those of the better rank? Why charged so often to the account of wit and subtle reasoning?

Were I to advise these authors, towards whom I am extremely well-affected on account of their good-humoured zeal and the seeming sociableness of their religion, I should say to them, "gentlemen! be not so cautious of furnishing your representative sceptic with too good arguments or too shrewd a turn of wit or humour. Be not so fearful of giving quarter. Allow your adversary his full reason, his ingenuity, sense, and art. Trust to the chief character or hero of your piece. Make him as dazzling bright as you are able. He will undoubtedly overcome the utmost force of his opponent, and dispel the darkness or cloud which the adversary may unluckily have raised. But if when you have fairly wrought up your antagonist to his due strength and cognisable proportion, your chief character cannot afterwards prove a match for him or shine with a superior brightness; whose fault is it? The subject's? This, I hope, you will never allow. Whose, therefore, beside your own? Beware then, and consider well your strength and mastership in this manner of writing, and in the qualifying practice of the polite world, ere you attempt these accurate and refined limnings or portraitures of mankind, or offer to bring gentlemen on the stage. For if real gentlemen seduced, as you pretend, and made erroneous in their religion or philosophy, discover not the least feature of their real faces in your looking-glass, nor know themselves in the least by your description, they will hardly be apt to think they are refuted. How wittily soever your comedy may be wrought up, they will scarce apprehend any of that wit to fall upon themselves. They may laugh indeed at the diversion you are pleased to give them, but the laugh perhaps may be different from what you intend. They may smile secretly to see themselves thus encountered; when they find, at last, your authority laid by and your scholastic weapons quitted, in favour of this weak attempt to master them by their own arms and proper ability."

Thus we have performed our critical task, and tried our strength both on our author and those of his order, who attempt to write in dialogue after the active dramatic,[1] mimical, or personating way, according to which a writer is properly poetical.

What remains, we shall examine in our succeeding and last chapter.

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[1] See Treatise III. part i. § 3.

CHAPTER III

Of extent or latitude of thought—Free-thinkers—Their cause and character—Dishonesty, a half-thought—Short-thinking, cause of vice and bigotry—Agreement of slavery and superstition—Liberty, civil, moral, spiritual—Free-thinking divines—Representatives incognito—Ambassadors from the moon—Effectual determination of Christian controversy and religious belief.

Being now come to the conclusion of my work, after having defended the cause of critics in general, and employed what strength I had in that science upon our adventurous author in particular; I may, according to equity and with the better grace, attempt a line or two in defence of that freedom of thought which our author has used, particularly in one of the personages of his last dialogue treatise.

There is good reason to suppose that, however equably framed or near alike the race of mankind may appear in other respects, they are not always equal thinkers, or of a like ability in the management of this natural talent which we call thought. The race, on this account, may therefore justly be distinguished, as they often are, by the appellation of the thinking and the unthinking sort. The mere unthinking are such as have not yet arrived to that happy thought by which they should observe "how necessary thinking is, and how fatal the want of it must prove to them." The thinking part of mankind, on the other side, having discovered the assiduity and industry requisite to right thinking, and being already commenced thinkers upon this foundation, are in the progress of the affair convinced of the necessity of thinking to good purpose and carrying the work to a thorough issue. They know that if they refrain or stop once upon this road, they had done as well never to have set out. They are not so supine as to be withheld by mere laziness, when nothing lies in the way to interrupt the free course and progress of their thought.

Some obstacles, 'tis true, may on this occasion be pretended. Spectres may come across and shadows of reason rise up against reason itself. But if men have once heartily espoused the reasoning or thinking habit, they will not easily be induced to lay the practice down; they will not at an instant be arrested or made to stand and yield themselves when they come to such a certain boundary, landmark, post, or pillar, erected here or there (for what reason may probably be guessed) with the inscription of a *ne plus ultra.*

'Tis not, indeed, any authority on earth, as we are well assured, can stop us on this road, unless we please to make the arrest or restriction of our own accord. 'Tis our own thought which must restrain our thinking. And whether the restraining thought be just, how shall we ever judge, without examining it freely and out of all constraint? How shall we be sure that we have justly quitted reason as too high and dangerous, too aspiring or presumptive; if through fear of any kind or submitting to mere command we quit our very examining thought, and in the moment stop short, so as to put an end to further thinking on the matter? Is there much difference between this case and that of the obedient beasts of burden, who stop precisely at their appointed inn, or at whatever point the charioteer or governor of the reins thinks fit to give the signal for a halt?

I cannot but from hence conclude that of all species of creatures said commonly to have brains, the most insipid, wretched, and preposterous are those whom in just propriety of speech we call half-thinkers.

I have often known pretenders to wit break out into admiration on the sight of some raw, heedless, unthinking gentleman, declaring on this occasion that they esteemed it the happiest case in the world, "never to think or trouble one's head with study or consideration." This I have always looked upon as one of the highest airs of distinction which the self-admiring wits are used to give themselves in public company. Now the echo or antiphony which these elegant exclaimers hope, by this reflection, to draw necessarily from their audience, is "that they themselves are over-freighted with this merchandise of thought, and have not only enough for ballast, but such a cargo over and above as is enough to sink them by its weight." I am apt, however, to imagine of these gentlemen that it was never their over-thinking which oppressed them, and that if their thought had ever really become oppressive to them, they might thank themselves for having under-thought or reasoned short, so as to rest satisfied with a very superficial search into matters of the first and highest importance.

If, for example, they overlooked the chief enjoyments of life, which are founded in honesty and a good mind; if they presumed mere life to be fully worth what its tenacious lovers are pleased to rate it at; if they thought public distinction, fame, power, an estate or title to be of the same value as is vulgarly conceived, or as they concluded on a first thought without further scepticism or after-deliberation; 'tis no wonder, if being in time become such mature dogmatists and well-practised dealers in the affairs of what they call a settlement or fortune, they are so hardly put to it to find ease or rest within themselves.

These are the deeply-loaded and over-pensive gentlemen, who, esteeming it the truest wit to pursue what they call their interest, wonder to find they are still as little at ease when they have succeeded as when they first attempted to advance.

There can never be less self-enjoyment than in these supposed wise characters, these selfish computers of happiness and private good, whose pursuits of interest, whether for this world or another, are attended with the same steady vein of cunning and low thought, sordid deliberations, perverse and crooked fancies, ill dispositions and false relishes of life and manners. The most negligent, undesigning, thoughtless rake has not only more of sociableness, ease, tranquillity and freedom from worldly cares, but in reality more of worth, virtue, and merit than such grave plodders and thoughtful gentlemen as these.

If it happens, therefore, that these graver, more circumspect, and deeply interested gentlemen have, for their soul's sake and through a careful provision for hereafter, engaged in certain speculations of religion, their taste of virtue and relish of life is not the more improved on this account. The thoughts they have on these new subjects of divinity are so biassed and perplexed by those half-thoughts and raw imaginations of interest and worldly affairs, that they are still disabled in the rational pursuit of happiness and good; and being necessitated thus to remain short-thinkers, they have the power to go no further than they are led by those to whom, under such disturbances and perplexities, they apply themselves for cure and comfort.

It has been the main scope and principal end of these volumes, "to assert the reality of a beauty and charm in moral as well as natural subjects, and to demonstrate the reasonableness of a proportionate taste and determinate choice in life and manners." The standard of this kind and the noted character of moral truth appear so firmly established in Nature itself, and so widely displayed through the intelligent world, that there is no genius, mind, or thinking principle which (if I may say so) is not really conscious in the case. Even the most refractory and obstinate understandings are by certain reprises or returns of thought on every occasion convinced of this existence, and necessitated, in common with others, to acknowledge the actual right and wrong.

'Tis evident that whensoever the mind, influenced by passion or humour, consents to any action, measure, or rule of life contrary to this governing standard and primary measure of intelligence, it can only be through a weak thought, a scantiness of judgment, and a defect in the application of that unavoidable impression and first natural rule of honesty and worth, against which whatever is advanced will be of no other moment than to render a life distracted, incoherent, full of irresolution, repentance, and self-disapprobation.

Thus every immorality and enormity of life can only happen from a partial and narrow view of happiness and good. Whatever takes from the largeness or freedom of thought must of necessity detract from that first relish or taste on which virtue and worth depend.

For instance, when the eye or appetite is eagerly fixed on treasure and the monied bliss of bags and coffers, 'tis plain there is a kind of fascination in the case. The sight is instantly diverted from all other views of excellence or worth. And here, even the vulgar, as well as the more liberal part of mankind, discover the contracted genius and acknowledge the narrowness of such a mind.

In luxury and intemperance we easily apprehend how far thought is oppressed and the mind debarred from just reflection, and from the free examination and censure of its own opinions or maxims, on which the conduct of a life is formed.

Even in that complicated good of vulgar kind which we commonly call interest, in which we comprehend both pleasure, riches, power and other exterior advantages, we may discern how a fascinated sight contracts a genius, and by shortening the view even of that very interest which it seeks, betrays the knave, and necessitates the ablest and wittiest proselyte of the kind to expose himself on every emergency and sudden turn.

But above all other enslaving vices and restrainers of reason and just thought, the most evidently ruinous and fatal to the understanding is that of superstition, bigotry, and vulgar enthusiasm. This passion, not contented like other vices to deceive and tacitly supplant our reason, professes open war, holds up the intended chains and fetters, and declares its resolution to enslave.

The artificial managers of this human frailty declaim against free-thought and latitude of understanding. To go beyond those bounds of thinking which they have prescribed is by them declared a sacrilege. To them freedom of mind, a mastery of sense, and a liberty in thought and action imply debauch, corruption, and depravity.

In consequence of their moral maxims and political establishments they can indeed advance no better notion of human happiness and enjoyment than that which is in every respect the most opposite to liberty. 'Tis to them doubtless that we owe the opprobriousness and abuse of those naturally honest appellations of free-livers, free-thinkers, latitudinarians, or whatever other character implies a largeness of mind and generous use of understanding. Fain would they confound licentiousness in morals with liberty in thought and action, and make the libertine, who has the least mastery of himself, resemble his direct opposite. For such indeed is the man of resolute purpose and immovable adherence to reason against everything which passion, prepossession, craft or fashion can advance in favour of aught else. But here, it seems, the grievance lies. 'Tis thought dangerous for us to be over-rational or too much masters of ourselves in what we draw by just conclusions from reason only. Seldom therefore do these expositors fail of bringing the thought of liberty into disgrace. Even at the expense of virtue and of that very idea of goodness on which they build the mysteries of their profitable science, they derogate from morals and reverse all true philosophy, they refine on selfishness and explode generosity, promote a slavish obedience in the room of voluntary duty and free service, exalt blind ignorance for devotion, recommend low thought, decry reason, extol voluptuousness,[1] wilfulness, vindicativeness, arbitrariness, vain glory, and even deify those weak passions which are the disgrace rather than ornament of human nature.[2]

But so far is it from the nature of liberty to indulge such passions as these,[3] that whoever acts at any time under the power of any single one may be said to have already provided for himself an absolute master. And he who lives under the power of a whole race (since 'tis scarce possible to obey one without the other) must of necessity undergo the worst of servitudes, under the most capricious and domineering lords.

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[1] *Moralists*, part ii. § 2, and below, p. 348.

[2] Treatise I. § 4, end.

[3] *Moralists*, part ii. § 2; part iii. § 3.

That this is no paradox even the writers for entertainment can inform us, however others may moralise who discourse or write (as they pretend) for profit and instruction. The poets even of the wanton sort give ample testimony of this slavery and wretchedness of vice. They may extol voluptuousness to the skies and point their wit as sharply as they are able against a virtuous state. But when they come afterwards to pay the necessary tribute to their commanding pleasures, we hear their pathetic moans and find the inward discord and calamity of their lives. Their example is the best of precepts, since they conceal nothing, are sincere, and speak their passion out aloud. And 'tis in this that the very worst of poets may justly be preferred to the generality of modern philosophers or other formal writers of a yet more specious name. The muses' pupils never fail to express their passions and write just as they feel. 'Tis not, indeed, in their nature to do otherwise, whilst they indulge their vein and are under the power of that natural enthusiasm which leads them to what is highest in their performance. They follow Nature. They move chiefly as she moves in them, without thought of disguising her free motions and genuine operations, for the sake of any scheme or hypothesis which they have formed at leisure and in particular narrow views. On this account, though at one time they quarrel perhaps with virtue for restraining them in their forbidden loves, they can at another time make her sufficient amends, when with indignation they complain "that merit is neglected, and their worthless rival preferred before them."[1]

> Contrane lucrum nil valere candidum
> Pauperis ingenium ?[2]

And thus even in common elegiac, in song, ode, or epigram consecrated to pleasure itself, we may often read the dolorous confession in behalf of virtue, and see at the bottom how the case stands:—

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[1] Treatise II. part iv. 2.

[2] ["To think that the honest heart of a poor man should have no weight against gold !"—Hor., *Epod.* xi. 11, 12.]

> Nam verae voces tum demum pectore ab imo
> Eliciuntur.[1]

The airy poets in these fits can, as freely as the tragedian, condole with virtue, and bemoan the case of suffering merit:—

> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

The poetic chiefs may give what reason they think fit for their humour of representing our mad appetites, especially that of love, under the shape of urchins and wanton boys scarce out of their state of infancy. The original design and moral of this fiction, I am persuaded, was to show us how little there was of great and heroic in the government of these pretenders, how truly weak and childish they were in themselves, and how much lower than mere children we then became when we submitted ourselves to their blind tutorage. There was no fear left in this fiction the boyish nature should be misconstrued as innocent and gentle. The storms of passion, so well known in every kind, kept the tyrannic quality of this wanton race sufficiently in view. Nor could the poetical description fail to bring to mind their mischievous and malignant play. But when the image of imperious threatening and absolute command was joined to that of ignorance, puerility, and folly, the notion was completed of that wretched slavish state which modern libertines, in conjunction with some of a graver character, admire and represent as the most eligible of any. "Happy condition!" says one. "Happy life, that of the indulged passions, might we pursue it! Miserable condition! miserable life, that of reason and virtue, which we are bid pursue!"[1]

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[1] ["For then and then only are the words of truth drawn from the bottom of a man's heart."—Lucretius, iii. 57.]

'Tis the same, it seems, with men in morals as in politics. When they have been unhappily born and bred to slavery, they are so far from being sensible of their slavish course of life, or of that ill usage, indignity, and misery they sustain, that they even admire their own condition, and being used to think short, and carry their views no further than those bounds which were early prescribed to them, they look upon tyranny as a natural case, and think mankind in a sort of dangerous and degenerate state when under the power of laws, and in the possession of a free government.

We may by these reflections come easily to apprehend what men they were who first brought reason and free thought under disgrace, and made the noblest of characters (that of a free thinker) to become invidious. 'Tis no wonder if the same interpreters would have those also to be esteemed free in their lives, and masters of good living, who are the least masters of themselves, and the most impotent in passion and humour of all their fellow-creatures. But far be it, and far surely will it ever be from any worthy genius to be consenting to such a treacherous language and abuse of words. For my own part, I thoroughly confide in the good powers of reason, "that liberty and freedom shall never by any artifice or delusion be made to pass with me as frightful sounds, or as reproachful, or invidious, in any sense."

I can no more allow that to be free living, where unlimited passion and unexamined fancy govern, than I can allow that to be a free government where the mere people govern, and not the laws. For no people in a civil state can possibly be free, when they are otherwise governed than by such laws as they themselves have constituted, or to which they have freely given consent. Now, to be released from these, so as to govern themselves by each day's will or fancy, and to vary on every turn the rule and measure of government, without respect to any ancient constitutions or establishments, or to the stated and fixed rules of equity and justice, is as certain slavery as it is violence, distraction, and misery, such as in the issue must prove the establishment of an irretrievable state of tyranny and absolute dominion.

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[1] *Moralists,* part ii. § 2.

In the determinations of life, and in the choice and government of actions he alone is free who has within himself no hindrance or control in acting what he himself, by his best judgment and most deliberate choice, approves. Could vice agree possibly with itself, or could the vicious any way reconcile the various judgments of their inward counsellors, they might with justice perhaps assert their liberty and independency. But whilst they are necessitated to follow least what, in their sedate hours, they most approve, whilst they are passively assigned and made over from one possessor to another[1] in contrary extremes, and to different ends and purposes of which they are themselves wholly ignorant, 'tis evident that the more they turn their eyes[2] (as many times they are obliged) towards virtue and a free life, the more they must confess their misery and subjection. They discern their own captivity, but not with force and resolution sufficient to redeem themselves and become their own. Such is the real tragic state, as the old tragedian represents it :—[1]

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[1] Hunccine an hunc sequeris? Subeas alternus oportet
Ancipiti obsequio dominos.

["Are you for following this hook or that? You must submit to each master in turn, with wavering allegiance."]—Pers., *Sat.* v. 155, 156. See Treatise III. part iii. §§ 1, 2, etc.

[2] Magne pater divum, saevos punire tyrannos
Haud alia ratione velis, cum dira libido
Moverit ingenium ferventi tincta veneno,
Virtutem videant, intabescantque relicta.

["Great father of the Gods, condescend to punish the cruelty of tyrants in no other way, when fierce passion dipped in fiery poison has stirred their souls. Let them look upon virtue and pine to think that they have abandoned her."—Persius, iii. 35-38.]

> Video meliora proboque,
> Deteriora sequor.[2]

And thus the highest spirits and most refractory wills contribute to the lowest servitude and most submissive state. Reason and virtue alone can bestow liberty. Vice is unworthy, and unhappy on this account only, "that it is slavish and debasing."

Thus have we pleaded the cause of liberty in general, and vindicated withal our author's particular freedom in taking the person of a sceptic, as he has done in this last treatise,[3] on which we have so largely paraphrased. We may now perhaps, in compliance with general custom, justly presume to add something in defence of the same kind of freedom we ourselves have assumed in these latter miscellaneous comments, since it would doubtless be very unreasonable and unjust for those who had so freely played the critic to expect anything less than the same free treatment and thorough criticism in return.

As for the style or language used in these comments, 'tis very different, we find, and varies in proportion with the author commented, and with the different characters and persons frequently introduced in the original treatises. So that there will undoubtedly be scope sufficient for censure and correction.

As for the observations on antiquity, we have in most passages, except the very common and obvious, produced our vouchers and authorities in our own behalf. What may be thought of our judgment or sense in the application of these authorities, and in the deductions and reasonings we have formed from such learned topics, must be submitted to the opinion of the wise and learned.

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[1] *καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα τολμήσω κακά· θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων.* ["And well I know the crime I shall commit, yet rage is stronger than all counsel."—Eur., *Med.* 1078, 1079.]

[2] ["I see and I esteem the better course, I follow the worse."—Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vii. 21.]

[3] Viz. The *Moralists* or *Philosophic Dialogue* recited in the person of a sceptic, under the name of Philocles. See Treatise v. part i. § 2.

In morals, of which the very force lies in a love of discipline and in a willingness to redress and rectify false thought and erring views; we cannot but patiently wait redress and amicable censure from the sole competent judges, the wise and good; whose interest it has been our whole endeavour to advance.

The only subject on which we are perfectly secure, and without fear of any just censure or reproach, is that of faith and orthodox belief. For in the first place it will appear that through a profound respect and religious veneration, we have forborne so much as to name any of the sacred and solemn mysteries of revelation.[1] And in the next place, as we can with confidence declare that we have never in any writing, public or private, attempted such high researches, nor have ever in practice acquitted ourselves otherwise than as just conformists to the lawful church; so we may, in a proper sense, be said faithfully and dutifully to embrace those holy mysteries, even in their minutest particulars, and without the least exception on account of their amazing depth. And though we are sensible that it would be no small hardship to deprive others of a liberty of examining and searching, with due modesty and submission, into the nature of those subjects; yet as for ourselves, who have not the least scruple whatsoever, we pray not any such grace or favour in our behalf, being fully assured of our own steady orthodoxy, resignation, and entire submission to the truly Christian and catholic doctrines of our holy church as by law established.

'Tis true, indeed, that as to critical learning[2] and the examination of originals, texts, glosses, various readings, styles, compositions, manuscripts, compilements, editions, publications, and other circumstances such as are common to the sacred books with all other writings and literature, this we have confidently asserted to be a just and lawful study. We have even represented this species of criticism as necessary to the preservation and purity of Scripture; that Sacred Scripture which has been so miraculously preserved in its successive copies and transcriptions under the eye (as we must needs suppose) of holy and learned critics, through so many dark ages of Christianity to these latter times, in which learning has been happily revived.

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[1] *Supra, Misc.* i. ch. ii.

[2] Treatise II. part iv. § 3.

But if this critical liberty raises any jealousy against us, we shall beg leave of our offended reader to lay before him our case at the very worst; that if on such a naked exposition it be found criminal, we may be absolutely condemned; if otherwise, acquitted, and with the same favour indulged as others in the same circumstances have been before us.

On this occasion, therefore, we may be allowed to borrow something from the form or manner of our dialogue author, and represent a conversation of the same free nature as that recited by him in his night scene,[1] where the supposed sceptic or free-thinker delivers his thoughts and reigns in the discourse.

'Twas in a more considerable company, and before a more numerous audience that, not long since, a gentleman of some rank (one who was generally esteemed to carry a sufficient caution and reserve in religious subjects of discourse, as well as an apparent deference to religion, and in particular to the national and established Church) having been provoked by an impertinent attack of a certain violent bigoted party, was drawn into an open and free vindication not only of free-thinking but free professing and discoursing in matters relating to religion and faith.

Some of the company, it seems, after having made bold with him as to what they fancied to be his principle, began to urge "the necessity of reducing men to one profession and belief." And several gentlemen, even of those who passed for moderate in their way, seemed so far to give in to this zealot opinion as to agree, "that notwithstanding the right method was not yet found, 'twas highly requisite that some way should be thought on to reconcile differences in opinion; since so long as this variety should last, religion they thought could never be successfully advanced."

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[1] Treatise v. part ii. § 5.

To this our gentleman at first answered coldly, that "what was impossible to be done, could not he thought be properly pursued as necessary to be done." But the raillery being ill taken, he was forced at last to defend himself the best he could upon this point, "that variety of opinion was not to be cured." And "that 'twas impossible all should be of one mind."

"I well know," said he, "that many pious men, seeing the inconveniences which the disunion of persuasions and opinions accidentally produces, have thought themselves obliged to stop this inundation of mischiefs, and have made attempts accordingly. Some have endeavoured to unite these fractions by propounding such a guide as they were all bound to follow, hoping that the unity of a guide would have produced unity of minds. But who this guide should be, after all, became such a question that 'twas made part of that fire itself which was to be extinguished. Others thought of a rule. This was to be the effectual means of union! This was to do the work or nothing could! But supposing all the world had been agreed on this rule, yet the interpretation of it was so full of variety, that this also became part of the disease."

The company, upon this preamble of our gentleman, pressed harder upon him than before, objecting the authority of Holy Scripture against him, and affirming this to be of itself a sufficient guide and rule. They urged again and again that known saying of a famed controversial divine of our Church against the divines of another, "that the Scripture, the Scripture was the religion of Protestants."

To this our gentleman at first replied only by desiring them to explain their word Scripture, and by inquiring into the original of this collection of ancienter and later tracts, which in general they comprehended under that title: whether it were the apocryphal Scripture or the more canonical? The full or the half-authorised? The doubtful or the certain? The controverted or uncontroverted? The singly-read or that of various reading? The text of these manuscripts or of those? The transcripts, copies, titles, catalogues of this Church and nation, or of that other? of this sect and party or of another? of those in one age called orthodox, and in possession of power, or of those who in another overthrew their predecessors' authority, and in their turn also assumed the guardianship and power of holy things? For how these sacred records were guarded in those ages, might easily (he said) be imagined by any one who had the least insight into the history of those times which we called primitive, and those characters of men whom we styled Fathers of the Church.

"It must be confessed," continued he, "'twas strange industry and unlucky diligence which was used, in this respect, by these ecclesiastical forefathers. Of all those heresies which gave them employment, we have absolutely no record or monument but what themselves who were adversaries have transmitted to us; and we know that adversaries, especially such who observe all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of their enemies, are not always the best recorders or witnesses of such transactions. We see it," continued he, in a very emphatical but somewhat embarrassed style, "we see it now in this very age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good registers of the actions of the adverse side: and if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now (now, I say, that it is possible for any man, especially for the interested adversary, to discover the imposture), it is far more unlikely that after-ages should know any other truth than such as serves the ends of the representers."

Our gentleman by these expressions had already given considerable offence to his zealot auditors. They plied him faster with passionate reproaches than with arguments or rational answers. This, however, served only to animate him the more, and made him proceed the more boldly, with the same assumed formality and air of declamation, in his general criticism of holy literature.

"There are," said he, "innumerable places that contain (no doubt) great mysteries, but so wrapped in clouds or hid in umbrages, so heightened with expressions or so covered with allegories and garments of rhetoric, so profound in the matter or so altered and made intricate in the manner, that they may seem to have been left as trials of our industry, and as occasions and opportunities for the exercise of mutual charity and toleration, rather than as the repositories of faith and furniture of creeds. For when there are found in the explications of these writings so many commentaries, so many senses and interpretations, so many volumes in all ages, and all like men's faces, no one exactly like another: either this difference is absolutely no fault at all, or if it be, it is excusable. There are, besides, so many thousands of copies that were writ by persons of several interests and persuasions, such different understandings and tempers, such distinct abilities and weaknessess, that 'tis no wonder there is so great variety of readings . . . whole verses in one that are not in another . . . whole books admitted by one church or communion which are rejected by another: and whole stories and relations admitted by some Fathers and rejected by others. . . . I consider, withal, that there have been many designs and views in expounding these writings; many senses in which they are expounded; and when the grammatical sense is found out, we are many times never the nearer. Now there being such variety of senses in Scripture, and but few places so marked out as not to be capable of more than one; if men will write commentaries by fancy, what infallible criterion will be left to judge of the certain sense of such places as have been the matter of question? I consider again, that there are indeed divers places in these sacred volumes, containing in them mysteries and questions of great concernment; yet such is the fabric and constitution of the whole, that there is no certain mark to determine whether the sense of these passages should be taken as literal or figurative. There is nothing in the nature of the thing to determine the sense or meaning; but it must be gotten out as it can. And therefore 'tis unreasonably required, that what is of itself ambiguous should be understood in its own prime sense and intention, under the pain of either a sin or an anathema. Very wise men, even the ancient Fathers, have expounded things allegorically, when they should have expounded them literally. Others expound things literally when they should understand them in allegory. If such great spirits could be deceived in finding out what kind of senses were to be given to Scriptures, it may well be endured that we who sit at their feet should be subject at least to equal failure. If we follow any one translation, or any one man's commentary, what rule or direction shall we have by which to choose that one aright? Or is there any one man that hath translated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? If we resolve to follow any one as far only as we like or fancy, we shall then only do wrong or right by chance. If we resolve absolutely to follow any one whithersoever he leads, we shall probably come at last where, if we have any eyes left, we shall see ourselves become sufficiently ridiculous."

The reader may here, perhaps, by his natural sagacity, remark a certain air of studied discourse and declamation, not so very proper or natural in the mouth of a mere gentleman, nor suitable to a company where alternate discourse is carried on in unconcerted measure and unpremeditated language. Something there was so very emphatical, withal, in the delivery of these words by the sceptical gentleman, that some of the company who were still more incensed against him for these expressions, began to charge him as a preacher of pernicious doctrines, one who attacked religion in form, and carried his lessons or lectures about with him to repeat by rote, at any time, to the ignorant and vulgar, in order to seduce them.

'Tis true, indeed, said he, gentlemen, that what I have here ventured to repeat is addressed chiefly to those you call ignorant; such, I mean, as being otherwise engaged in the world, have had little time, perhaps, to bestow upon inquiries into divinity matters. As for you, gentlemen, in particular, who are so much displeased with my freedom, I am well assured you are in effect so able and knowing, that the truth of every assertion I have advanced is sufficiently understood and acknowledged by you, however it may happen that, in your great wisdom, you think it proper to conceal these matters from such persons as you are pleased to style the vulgar.

'Tis true, withal, gentlemen, continued he, I will confess to you, that the words you have heard repeated are not my own. They are no other than what have been publicly and solemnly delivered even by one[1] of the episcopal order, a celebrated

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[1] The pious and learned Bishop Taylor, in his treatise *On the Liberty of Prophesying*, printed in his collection of Polemical and Moral Discourses, anno 1657. The pages answering to the places above cited are, 401, 402 (and in the epistle dedicatory, three or four leaves before), 438, 439-444, 451, 452. After which, in the succeeding page, he sums up his sense on this subject of sacred literature, and the liberty of criticism, and of private judgment and opinion in these matters, in the following words: "Since there are so many copies, with infinite varieties of reading; since a various interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent, may much alter the sense; since some places have divers literal senses, many have spiritual, mystical, and allegorical meanings; since there are so many tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties and improprieties of language, whose understanding depends upon such circumstances, that it is almost impossible to know the proper interpretation, now that the knowledge of such circumstances and particular stories is irrecoverably lost; since there are some mysteries, which at the best advantage of expression are not easy to be apprehended, and whose explication, by reason of our imperfections, must needs be dark, sometimes weak, sometimes unintelligible: and lastly, since those ordinary means of expounding Scripture, as searching the originals, conference of places, parity of reason, and analogy of faith are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible; he that is the wisest, and by consequence the likeliest to expound truest, in all probability of reason will be very far from confidence, because every one of

Churchman, and one of the highest sort, as appears by his many devotional works, which carry the rites, ceremonies, and pomp of worship with the honour and dignity of the priestly and episcopal order to the highest degree. In effect, we see the reverend doctor's treatises standing, as it were, in the front of this order of authors, and as the foremost of those good books used by the politest and most refined devotees of either sex. They maintain the principal place in the study of almost every elegant and high divine. They stand in folios and other volumes, adorned with variety of pictures, gildings, and other decorations, on the advanced shelves or glass-cupboards of the ladies' closets. They are in use at all seasons and for all places, as well for church-service as closet-preparation; and, in short, may vie with any devotional books in British Christendom.

these, and many more, are like so many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depressing our certainty of finding out truth in such mysteries and amidst so many difficulties. And, therefore, a wise man that considers this, would not willingly be prescribed to by others; for it is best every man should be left in that liberty, from which no man can justly take him, unless he could secure him from error." The Reverend Prelate had but a few pages before (viz. p. 427) acknowledged, indeed, "that we had an apostolical warrant to contend earnestly for the faith. But then," says the good bishop, very candidly and ingeniously, "as these things recede farther from the foundation, our certainty is the less. . . . And therefore it were very fit that our confidence should be according to our evidence, and our zeal according to our confidence." He adds, p. 507, "all these disputes concerning tradition, councils, Fathers, etc., are not arguments against or besides reason, but contestations and pretences of the best arguments, and the most certain satisfaction of our reason. But then all these coming into question submit themselves to reason, that is, to be judged by human understanding, upon the best grounds and information it can receive. So that Scripture, tradition, Councils and Fathers are the evidence in a question, but reason is the judge: that is, we being the persons that are to be persuaded, we must see that we be persuaded reasonably; and it is unreasonable to assent to a lesser evidence when a greater and clearer is propounded; but of that every man for himself is to take cognisance, if he be able to judge; if he be not, he is not bound under the tie of necessity to know anything of it."

And for the life and character of the man himself, I leave it to you, gentlemen (you, I mean, of the zealot kind), to except against it, if you think proper. 'Tis your manner, I know, and what you never fail to have recourse to when any authority is produced against you. Personal reflection is always seasonable and at hand on such an occasion. No matter what virtue, honesty, or sanctity may lie in the character of the person cited. No matter though he be ever so much, in other respects, of your own party and devoted to your interest. If he has indiscreetly spoken some home truths, or discovered some secret which strikes at the temporal interests of certain spiritual societies, he is quickly doomed to calumny and defamation.

I shall try this experiment, however, once more (continued our gentleman), and as a conclusion to this discourse will venture to produce to you a further authority of the same kind. You shall have it before you in the exact phrase and words of the great author in his theological capacity, since I have now no further occasion to conceal my citations, and accommodate them to the more familiar style and language of conversation.

Our excellent Archbishop[1] and late Father of our church, when expressly treating that very subject of a rule in matters of belief, in opposition to Mr. S—— and Mr. R——, his Romish antagonists, shows plainly how great a shame it is for us Protestants at least, whatever the case may be with Romanists, to disallow difference of opinions and forbid private examination and search into matters of ancient record and Scriptural tradition, when at the same time we have no pretence to oral or verbal; no claim to any absolute superior judge or decisive judgment in the case; no polity, church, or community; no particular man or number of men who are not, even by our own confession, plainly fallible and subject to error and mistake.

"The Protestants," says his Grace (speaking in the person of Mr. S—— and the Romanists), "cannot know how many the books of Scripture ought to be; and which of the many controverted ones may be securely put in that catalogue, which not. But I shall tell him (replies his Grace) that we know that just so many ought to be received as uncontroverted books, concerning which it cannot be shown there was ever any controversy." It was not incumbent perhaps on my lord Archbishop to help Mr. S—— so far in his objection as to add, that in reality the burning, suppressing, and interpolating method, so early in fashion and so tightly practised on the epistles, comments, histories, and writings of the orthodox and heretics of old, made it impossible to say with any kind of assurance, "what books, copies, or transcripts those were, concerning which there was never any controversy at all." This indeed would be a point not so easily to be demonstrated. But his Grace proceeds in showing the weakness of the Romish pillar, tradition. "For it must either," says he, "acknowledge some books to have been controverted, or not. If not, why doth he make a supposition of controverted books? If oral tradition acknowledges some books to have been controverted, then it cannot assure us that they have not been controverted, nor consequently that they ought to be received as never having been controverted; but only as such, concerning which those Churches who did once raise a controversy about them, have been since satisfied that they are canonical.[1] Where is then the infallibility of oral tradition? How does the living voice of the present Church assure us that what books are now received by her were ever received by her? And if it cannot do this, but the matter must come to be tried by the best records of former ages (which the Protestants are willing to have the catalogue tried by), then it seems the Protestants have a better way to know what books are canonical than is the infallible way of oral tradition. And so long as 'tis better, no matter though it be not called infallible."

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[1] Viz. Archbishop Tillotson in his *Rule of Faith*, p. 677.

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[1] His Grace subjoins immediately: "The traditionary Church now receives the Epistle to the Hebrews as canonical. I ask, do they receive it as ever delivered for such? That they must, if they receive it from oral tradition, which conveys things to them under this notion as ever delivered; and yet St. Hierom (speaking not as a speculator but a testifier) says expressly of it that the custom of the Latin Church doth not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures. What saith Mr. S—— to this? It is clear from this testimony that the Roman Church in St. Hierom's time did not acknowledge this epistle for canonical; and 'tis as plain that the present Roman Church doth receive it for canonical."

Thus the free and generous archbishop. For, indeed, what greater generosity is there than in owning truth frankly and openly, even where the greatest advantages may be taken by an adversary? Accordingly, our worthy Archbishop speaking again immediately in the person of his adversary, "the Protestants,"[1] says he, "cannot know that the very original, or a perfectly true copy of these books, hath been preserved. Nor is it necessary," replies the archbishop, "that they should know either of these. It is sufficient that they know that those copies which they have are not materially corrupted. . . . But how do the Church of Rome know that they have perfectly true copies of the Scriptures in the original languages? They do not pretend to know this. The learned men of that Church acknowledge the various readings as well as we, and do not pretend to know, otherwise than by probable conjecture (as we also may do) which of those readings is the true one."[2]

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[1] P. 678.

[2] The reader perhaps may find it worth while to read after this what the Archbishop represents (pp. 716, etc.) of the plausible introduction of the grossest article of belief in the times when the habit of making creeds came in fashion. And accordingly it may be understood of what effect the dogmatising practice in divinity has ever been. "We will suppose, then, that about the time when universal ignorance and the genuine daughter of it (call her devotion or superstition) had overspread the world, and the generality of people were strongly inclined to believe strange things, and even the greatest contradictions were recommended to them under the notion of mysteries, being told by their priests and guides that the more contradictious anything is to reason, the greater merit there is in believing it, I say, let us suppose that in this state of things one or more of the most eminent then in the Church, either out of design or out of superstitious ignorance and mistake of the sense of our Saviour's words

And thus, continued our lay-gentleman, I have finished my quotations, which I have been necessitated to bring in my own defence to prove to you that I have asserted nothing on this head of religion, faith, or the sacred mysteries which has not been justified and confirmed by the most celebrated churchmen and respected divines. You may now proceed in your invectives; bestowing as free language of that kind as your charity and breeding will permit. And you, reverend sirs, who have assumed a character which sets you above that of the mere gentlemen, and releases you from those decorums and constraining measures of behaviour to which we of an inferior sort are bound, you may liberally deal your religious compliments and salutations in what dialect you think fit, since, for my own part, neither the names of heterodox, schismatic, heretic, sceptic, nor even infidel or atheist itself will in the least scandalise me, whilst the

used in the consecration of the Sacrament, should advance this new doctrine, that the words of consecration, etc. . . . Such a doctrine as this was very likely to be advanced by the ambitious clergy of that time as a probable means to draw in the people to a greater veneration of them. . . . Nor was such a doctrine less likely to take and prevail among the people in an age prodigiously ignorant and strongly inclined to superstition, and thereby well prepared to receive the grossest absurdities under the notion of mystery. . . . Now supposing such a doctrine as this, so fitted to the humour and temper of the age, to be once asserted either by chance or out of design, it would take like wildfire, especially if by some one or more who bore sway in the Church it were but recommended with convenient gravity and solemnity. . . . And for the contradictions contained in this doctrine, it was but telling the people then (as they do in effect now) that contradictions ought to be no scruple in the way of faith ; that the more impossible anything is 'tis the fitter to be believed ; that it is not praiseworthy to believe plain possibilities, but this is the gallantry and heroical power of faith, this is the way to oblige God Almighty for ever to us, to believe flat and downright contradictions. . . . The more absurd and unreasonable anything is, it is for that very reason the more proper matter for an article of faith. And if any of these innovations be objected against as contrary to former belief and practice, it is but putting forth a lusty act of faith and believing another contradiction, that though they be contrary yet they are the same." Above, pp. 206-208.

sentence comes only from your mouths. On the contrary, I rather strive with myself to suppress whatever vanity might naturally arise in me from such favour bestowed. For whatever may in the bottom be intended me by such a treatment, 'tis impossible for me to term it other than favour, since there are certain enmities which it will be ever esteemed a real honour to have merited.

If, contrary to the rule and measure of conversation, I have drawn the company's attention towards me thus long, without affording them an intermission during my recital, they will, I hope, excuse me, the rather because they heard the other recitals and were witnesses to the heavy charge and personal reflection which, without any real provocation, was made upon me in public by these zealot gentlemen to whom I have thus replied. And notwithstanding they may, after such breaches of charity as are usual with them, presume me equally out of charity on my own side, I will take upon me, however, to give them this good advice at parting: "that since they have of late been so elated by some seeming advantages and a prosperity which they are ill fitted to bear, they would at least beware of accumulating too hastily those high characters, appellations, titles, and ensigns of power, which may be tokens, perhaps, of what they expect hereafter, but which, as yet, do not answer the real power and authority bestowed on them." The garb and countenance will be more graceful when the thing itself is secured to them and in their actual possession. Meanwhile, the anticipation of high titles, honours, and nominal dignities beyond the common style and ancient usage, though it may be highly fashionable at present, may not prove beneficial or advantageous in the end.

I would, in particular, advise my elegant antagonists of this zealot-kind, that among the many titles they assume to themselves they would be rather more sparing in that high one of ambassador, till such time as they have just means and foundation to join that of plenipotentiary together with it. For as matters stand hitherto in our British world, neither their commission from the sovereign nor that which they pretend from heaven, amounts to any absolute or determining power.

The first holy messengers (for that I take to be the highest apostolic name) brought with them their proper testimonials in their lives, their manners, and behaviour, as well as in powerful works, miracles, and signs from heaven. And though, indeed, it might well be esteemed a miracle in the kind, should our present messengers go about to represent their predecessors in any part of their demeanour or conversation, yet there are further miracles remaining for them to perform ere they can in modesty plead the apostolic or messenger authority. For though in the torrent of a sublime and figurative style a holy apostle may have made use, perhaps, of such a phrase as that of embassy or ambassador to express the dignity of his errand, 'twere to be wished that some who were never sent of any errand or message at all from God himself, would use a modester title to express their voluntary negotiation between us and heaven.

I must confess, for my own part, that I think the notion of an embassy from thence to be at best somewhat high strained in the metaphorical way of speech. But certain I am that if there be any such residentship or agentship now established, 'tis not immediately from God himself, but through the magistrate and by the prince or sovereign power here on earth, that these gentlemen agents are appointed, distinguished, and set over us. They have undoubtedly legal charter[1] and character, legal titles and precedencies, legal habits, coats of arms, colours, badges. But they may do well to consider that a thousand badges or liveries bestowed by men merely can never be sufficient to entitle them to the same authority as theirs who bore the immediate testimony and miraculous signs of power from above. For in this case there was need only of eyes and ordinary senses to distinguish the commission and acknowledge the embassy or message as divine.

But allowing it ever so certain a truth, "that there has been a thousand or near two thousand years' succession in this commission of embassy," where shall we find this commission to have lain? How has it been supplied still, or renewed? How often dormant? How often divided, even in one and the same species of claimants? What party are they among moderns who by virtue of any immediate testimonial from heaven are thus entitled? Where are the letters patent? the credentials? For these should in the nature of the thing be open, visible, and apparent.

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[1] Treatise III. near the end.

A certain Indian of the train of the ambassador princes sent to us lately from some of those pagan nations, being engaged one Sunday in visiting our churches and happening to ask his interpreter, "who the eminent persons were whom he observed haranguing so long, with such authority from a high place?" was answered, "they were ambassadors from the Almighty, or (according to the Indian language) from the sun." Whether the Indian took this seriously or in raillery did not appear. But having afterwards called in, as he went along, at the chapels of some of his brother-ambassadors of the Romish religion, and at some other Christian dissenting congregations, where matters, as he perceived, were transacted with greater privacy and inferior state, he asked "whether these also were ambassadors from the same place." He was answered "that they had indeed been heretofore of the embassy, and had possession of the same chief places he had seen, but they were now succeeded there by others." "If those, therefore," replied the Indian, "were ambassadors from the sun, these, I take for granted, are from the moon."

Supposing, indeed, one had been no pagan but a good Christian, conversant in the original Holy Scriptures but unacquainted with the rites, titles, habits, and ceremonials, of which there is no mention in those writings, might one not have inquired, with humble submission, into this affair? Might one not have softly and at a distance applied for information concerning this high embassy, and addressing perhaps to some inferior officer or livery-man of the train asked modestly, "How and whence they came? whose equipage they appeared in? at whose charges they were entertained? and by whose suffrage or command appointed and authorised? Is it true, pray sirs! that their Excellencies of the present establishment are the sole-commissioned? or are there as many real commissioners as there are pretenders? If so, there can be no great danger for us, whichever way we apply ourselves. We have ample choice, and may adhere to which commission we like best. If there be only one single true one, we have then, it seems, good reason to look about us, search narrowly into the affair, be scrupulous in our choice, and (as the current physic bills admonish us) beware of counterfeits, since there are so many of these abroad with earthly powers and temporal commissions to back their spiritual pretences."

'Tis to be feared, in good earnest, that the discernment of this kind will prove pretty difficult, especially amidst this universal contention, embroil, and fury of religious challengers, these high defiances of contrary believers, this zealous opposition of commission to commission, and this din of hell, anathemas, and damnations raised everywhere by one religious party against another.

So far are the pretendedly commissioned parties from producing their commission openly, or proving it from the original record or court-rolls of heaven, that they deny us inspection into these very records they plead, and refuse to submit their title to human judgment or examination.

A poet of our nation insinuates indeed in their behalf, that they are fair enough in this respect. For when the murmuring people, speaking by their chosen orator or spokesman to the priests, says to them,—

> With ease you take what we provide with care,
>   And we who your legation must maintain,
> Find all your tribe in the commission are,
>   And none but Heaven could send so large a train,

the apologist, afterwards excusing this boldness of the people and soothing the incensed priests with fairer words, says to them, on a foot of moderation, which he presumes to be their character:—

> You with such temper their intemperance bear,
> To show your solid science does rely
> So on itself as you no trial fear:
> For arts are weak that are of sceptics shy.[1]

The poet, it seems, never dreamt of a time when the very countenance of moderation should be out of fashion with the gentlemen of this order, and the word itself exploded as unworthy of their profession. And, indeed, so far are they at present from bearing with any sceptic or inquirer, ever so modest or discreet, that to hear an argument on a contrary side to theirs, or read whatever may be writ in answer to their particular assertions, is made the highest crime. Whilst they have among themselves such differences and sharp debates about their heavenly commission, and are even in one and the same community or establishment divided into different sects and headships, they will allow no particular survey or inspection into the foundations of their controverted title. They would have us inferior passive mortals, amazed as we are, and beholding with astonishment from afar these tremendous subjects of dispute, wait blindfold the event and final decision of the controversy. Nor is it enough that we are merely passive. 'Tis required of us, that in the midst of this irreconcilable debate concerning heavenly authorities and powers, we should be as confident of the veracity of some one, as of the imposture and cheat of all the other pretenders; and that, believing firmly there is still a real commission at the bottom, we should endure the misery of these conflicts and engage on one side or the other as we happen to have our birth or education, till by fire and sword, execution, massacre, and a kind of depopulation of this earth, it be determined at last amongst us,[1] "Which is the true commission, exclusive of all others and superior to the rest."

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[1] *Gondibert,* bk. ii. canto 1.

Here our secular gentleman, who in the latter end of his discourse had already made several motions and gestures which betokened a retreat, made his final bow in form and quitted the place and company for that time, till (as he told his auditors) he had another opportunity and fresh leisure to hear, in his turn, whatever his antagonists might anew object to him in a manner more favourable and moderate, or (if they so approved) in the same temper and with the same zeal as they had done before.

[1] *Supra*, p. 212.

INDEX

Abraham, ii. 232
Absolutism, i. 141
Academic Philosophy, ii. 9, 309
Addison, i. xv, xvi, xix, xlv
Admiration, ii. 177, 178
Advice to an Author, i. 103
Advice, i. 103
Affectation, ii. 53
Affection, natural, public, and private, i. 74-81, 82-85, 247-250, 280-336 ; ii. 77, 291-294
Ainsworth, M., i. xliii
Alchemy, ii. 10
Alcibiades, ii. 234
Ambition, i. 210, 327
Anacharsis, i. 61
Anatomy, ii. 65, 73, 135
Anger, i. 99, 320
Animals, i. 245, 285, 314 ; ii. 72, 74, 76, 120, 287, 289
Apelles, i. 220
Apollo, i. 7
Appetite and Reason, i. 123
Aratus, ii. 303
Architecture, ii. 133, 208
Aristophanes, i. 160 ; ii. 305
Aristotle, i. xxii, 52, 94, 96, 129, 156, 163, 223 ; ii. 243
Art and Nature, ii. 135
Art, Shaftesbury's views of, i. xliii, 132, 218, 219, 227 ; ii. 11, 267, 317-321
Arthur, ii. 225
Arts and Morality, i. 217, 227
Arts and Sciences, promotion of, i. 145-149, 151-157
Atellan plays, i. 164
Atheism, i. 240, 241, 257, 261, 275 ; ii. 47, 49, 89, 93, 196, 339
Athens, i. 161, 162 ; ii. 242, 243
Augustus, i. 148, 175
Authors, i. 104-112, 127, 131, 139, 172, 179, 197, 223 ; ii. 316, 322

Babylonian empire, ii. 188
Bacchic worship, i. 33
Bacon, ii. 199
Bart'lemy Fair, i. 21
Baumgarten, i. xliii
Bays, Mr., ii. 328, 329, 333
Beauty, i. 90, 91, 94 ; ii. 20, 21, 69, 125, 126, 128, 130-137, 141-144, 147, 268
Beggars, i. 26
Belief, ii. 219-221
Berkeley, i. xxv, xlv
Bible, i. 229-231 ; ii. 228-232, 302
Bigotry, i. 307 ; ii. 207, 345
Blank verse, i. 142
Blount, C., i. 238
Boileau, i. 142 ; ii. 331
Bolingbroke, i. xxvi, xxviii ; ii. 262
Bossu, i. 94
Boyle, ii. 10
Breeding, i. 86
Britain, i. 73, 139, 143, 175, 177 ; ii. 215, 247-249
Brown, J., i. xv, xxvii, xxxviii, xxxix, 52
Browning, i. xxxiv
Buffoonery, i. 50, 51, 85
Bury, Rev. A., i. 238

Cabala, ii. 206
Caesar, i. 146, 149
Cantonising, i. 76
Cappadocians, ii. 312

Caraccio, i. 218
Carnival, i. 58
Casaubons, i. 70, 226
Catechisms, i. 197
Catholicism. See *Rome*
Cervantes, ii. 313
Chance, i. 29
Charles I., i. 140
Charity, ii. 227
Chivalry, i. 177
Christianity, i. xxiii, 19 ; ii. 19, 51, 55, 201, 306
Church and Clergy, ii. 363-369
Cicero, ii. 168
Circumcision, ii. 189
Club methods, i. 53
Collins, A., i. xxviii
Comedy, i. 157-160, 164, 165, 166, 169
Common sense, i. 55, 69
Conscience, i. 305
Controversy, i. 47, 48 ; ii. 161, 223
Conversation, polite, ii. 6
Corneille, ii. 210, 331
Courage, i. 79
Credulity, i. 222 ; ii. 88
Criticism, i. 30, 150, 152, 156, 170 ; ii. 258, 313, 324-331
Cudworth, ii. 50, 196
Cumberland, i. xxxii, xxxvii
Cybele, ii. 45

Daemons, i. 112, 116, 240
Dancing, ii. 228
Death, i. 203
Defoe, i. 223
Deism, i. 238 ; ii. 19, 53
Deity, i. 240, 242, 258-265, 266-280, 305 ; ii. 57, 91, 93, 98, 103, 110, 113, 114
Demosthenes, ii. 243
Descartes, i. xxxiii, 191 ; ii. 275
Despotism, i. 72, 144, 155
Dialogue, i. 51, 132, 133 ; ii. 9, 337-340
Diana, ii. 208
Dion Cassius, ii. 171
Dogmatism, ii. 238
Drama, ii. 160, 315. See *Comedy* and *Tragedy*
Dryden, i. xv, xvii, 142 ; ii. 322, 327-329. See *Bays*

Education, i. 82, 125, 215, 331
Egypt, Priesthood of, ii. 181-185, 188-194, 206
England and Englishmen, i. 73, 141, 175 ; ii. 215, 248, 315-320
Enthusiasm, Letter concerning, i. 4
Enthusiasm, i. 12, 32, 35 ; ii. 54, 129, 173, 179, 198
Ephesians, ii. 208
Epicurus and Epicureanism, ii. 41, 42, 53
Epimenides, ii. 303
Ethiopia, ii. 186
Euphranor, i. 219
Euripides, i. 157 ; ii. 243

Fables, ii. 283
Faction, i. 76
Fairies, i. 7
Fanaticism, ii. 89, 195, 196. See *Zeal* and *Bigotry*
Fancy, i. 122, 201, 208-210, 218, 302 ; ii. 149, 278, 349
Fear, i. 191
Fénelon, ii. 214
Fowler, Bishop, i. 7
Fowler, Prof., i. x, xix, xxiv, xl, xliii
Free thought, ii. 341-353
Free trade, i. 46
French literature, i, 142, 216
Friendship, i. 67, 68 ; ii. 37, 41
Future state, i. 268-277 ; ii. 59

Gataker, i. 70
Genius. See *Deity*
Genius, i. 127, 151
Gnostics, ii. 203
Gondibert, ii. 368
Gorgias, i. 52
Gospels, ii. 307
Gothicism, i. 141, 153, 227 ; ii. 313
Government, i. 15, 74, 138, 155, 272
Gravity and fraud, i. 44, 52
Greek culture, i. 145, 161, 163, 178 ; ii. 241-243
Gregory the Great, ii. 303, 304

Harley, ii. 261
Heart, wisdom of, i. 180
Helmont, Van, i. 186
Herbert of Cherbury, i. 238
Herder, i. ix
Herodotus, ii. 309
History, i. 146
Hobbes, i. xix, xxviii, xxxiii, xxxvii, 61, 79, 238, 281

INDEX

Homer, i. 129, 157, 160, 166 ; ii. 17, 26, 175, 318
Honesty, i. 69, 83, 114, 171 ; ii. 175, 177
Honour, i. 81, 83
Horace, i. 70, 211 ; ii. 168, 282, 310
Hume, i. xxxvii, xli
Humour, i. 17 ; ii. 337
Hutcheson, i. xiv, xxxvii, xxxviii

Inquiry concerning Virtue, etc., i. 237
Inspiration, i. 32
Instinct, i. 248, 250, 257, 259, 288, 289 ; ii. 76
Insularity, English, ii. 251
Interest, self, i. 77, 80, 183
Intolerance, i. 16, 22
Isis, ii. 185
Italians, i. 51, 216

James I., i. 140
Jephthah, ii. 232
Jews, i. xxiii, 22, 23, 69 ; ii. 188-193, 204, 227, 229
Job, i. xxxiii, 25
Jonah, ii. 229
Joseph, ii. 192, 193
Joshua, i. 229, 230
Julian, ii. 210-212
Jupiter, i. 262

Kant, i. xiv
"Kind," instinct of, i. 74
King, Archbishop, i. xxxi
Kings, i. 138
Knavery, i. 64, 87, 113, 136
Knights Templars, i. 59

Lamb, i. xv
Leclerc, ii. 288, 305
Leibnitz, i. xiv, xxvi, xxxi, 187
Leon, St., ii. 213
Liberty, i. 144, 145, 155-219 ; ii. 44
Life, love of, i. 317-319
Light, ii. 117
Livy, cited, i. 33
Locke, i. x, xi, xx, xxxvii, xxxviii, 223
Love, i. 116-121, 200, 213, 311 ; ii. 125
Lucian, i. xxii ; ii. 330
Lucretius, i. 34, 37 ; ii. 175
Luke, ii. 307
Lycurgus, ii. 308

Macaulay, i. xi
Magi, i. 59, 60
Magic, ii. 193
Mahometanism, i. 227 ; ii. 301
Mandeville, i. xxxviii-xli
Marsham, ii. 189-191
Martineau, Dr., i. xxxiv
Mathematics, i. 188
Melancholy, i. 12, 24 ; ii. 198
Menander, i. 160, 167 ; ii. 305
Messiah, ii. 205
Metaphysics, i. 188 ; ii. 275
Milton, i. 141, 142, 180
Miracles, i. 222 ; ii. 87, 90, 200, 201
Miscellaneous Reflections, ii. 157
Molinos, ii. 214
Montaigne, i. ix, xv, 331
Montesquieu, i. ix
Moralists, The, ii. 3
Morals, and art, i. 171, 179, 181 ; ii. 217, 227
Morals, basis of, i. 63-93, 227-338 ; ii. 137
Moral sense, i. 262
More, Dr. H., i. xxxiii ; ii. 197
Moses, ii. 190-193, 227
Muses, the, i. 5-8, 142, 204 ; ii. 175
Music, i. 152-154, 227
Mystery in religion, ii. 206
Mysticism, ii. 55

Nature, i. 78, 95, 215, 228, 240, 243, 260, 261, 314, 324 ; ii. 10, 14, 22, 39, 62, 71-84
Nature, state of, i. 73 ; ii. 78-84
Nero, ii. 169
Novels, i. 222-225
Nympholepti, i. 35

Olympic games, i. 179
Opinion, ii. 139, 146, 152
Oracles, ii. 90
Oratory, i. 49, 155 ; ii. 243, 244
Orthodoxy, ii. 220

Painting, i. xliii, 132
Pan, i. 12
Panegyric, i. 175
Panics, i. 13
Parody, i. 130, 160
Pascal, i. xxvii
Passions, the, i. 62, 289-293, 297, 320, 321, 330 ; ii. 348
Patria, ii. 248

Patriots, ii. 244-250, 262
Patrons, i. 147, 148, 149, 181, 197
Paul, St., i. xxiii, 23 ; ii. 202, 209
Persecution, ii. 209, 220-224
Persians, i. 60 ; ii. 185, 186
Persuasion, i. 154
Petronius, cited, i. 126
Philosophy, i. 82-88, 156, 166, 186, 187, 193, 194, 225 ; ii. 3-9, 195, 240, 255
Phonetics, i. 187
Plato, i. 38, 161 ; ii. 309
Pleasure, ii. 29-33, 147, 280, 349
Pliny, i. 219
Plutarch, i. 29, 38 ; ii. 233
Poets and Poetry, i. 5, 129, 135, 136, 157, 166 ; ii. 197, 320
Polytheism, i. 241
Pope, i. ix, xxv-xxvii, xxxiii-xxxv
Pre-sensation, ii. 76
Press, i. 198
Priests and Priesthoods, ii. 181-185, 188-194, 205
Prometheus, ii. 15, 16
Prophecy, i. 32
Prophets, French, i. 20, 31
Property and dominion, ii. 185, 186
Protestantism, i. 19 ; ii. 360
Public spirit, i. 27, 66, 85, 287 ; ii. 38
Punning, i. 46, 141
Puppet-shows, i. 21, 22
Pyrrho and Pyrrhonism, ii. 101, 104
Pythagoreanism, i. 14 ; ii. 234, 282

Quietists, ii. 214

Raillery, i. 43-65, 85, 238
Reason, i. 49, 54, 62, 123
Rehearsal, The, i. 169
Religion, i. 17, 232, 237, 273, 303 ; ii. 85, 90, 177, 179, 231-235
Revelation, ii. 90
Revenge, i. 320
Rewards and punishments, i. 268-277 ; ii. 59
Rhyme, ii. 320
Ridicule, i. 9-11, 81 ; ii. 253, 254
Robinson, H. C., i. xl
Rochefoucauld, i. 80
Rochester, i. 79
Rome, Church of, i. 20, 22 ; ii. 212, 214, 305, 306, 361
Rome, empire and civilisation of, i. 143-145, 164, 176, 219 ; ii. 204, 205
Rymer, ii. 330

Sacheverel, i. xlii
Sadducees, ii. 204
Salmasius, i. 70
Satire, i. 173 ; ii. 84
Saul, i. 32, 68
Scepticism, ii. 17-20, 34, 53, 85, 103, 105, 201, 202, 238
Scholarship, i. 215
Scriptures, ii. 298-300
Self and selfishness, i. 81, 247-250, 329
Seneca, ii. 169
Sensus Communis, i. 43
Shakspere, i. xvi, xviii, 141, 179, 224
Sibyls, i. 33 ; ii. 299
Society, rise and basis of, i. 74 ; ii. 82
Socrates, i. 23 ; ii. 307
Soliloquy, i. 101
Soliloquy, practice of, i. 105-112
Solitude, i. 113
Somers, i. 8
Sophists, i. 156, 167
Sophocles, i. 157
Species, i. 74, 246, 249 ; ii. 289, 293
Spencer, J., cited, ii. 191, 192
Spicker, i. xxix
Spinoza, i. xxxi-xxxiv, 243, 269, 280, 302 ; ii. 10
Spirits, i. 33
Spirits, animal, i. 50
Strabo, i. 136, 164
Style, i. 142, 151, 161, 168 ; ii. 169, 171, 243
Sublime, the, i. 165, 169
Superstition, ii. 122, 184
Swift, i. xix, xlv

Taste, i. 216-228 ; ii. 243, 252-256, 257
Taylor, Bishop, cited, i. 67 ; ii. 180, 181, 358, 359
Theism, i. 240, 241, 261-265, 266-280 ; ii. 19, 52, 54-59, 91, 93, 94, 98, 103-124
Thucydides, ii. 309
Tillotson, ii. 360-363
Tindal, i. xiv
Toland, i. xii, xxiv, xliii, 238
Toleration, i. 21 ; ii. 354, *sq.*
Tragedy, i. 157, 161, 164, 165, 180
Trajan, i. 148
Truth, i. 94-98 ; ii. 220, 259
Turks, i. 148
Tyranny, i. 72, 144, 155

INDEX

Uniformity, in religion, i. 15 ; ii. 353-369
Unitarianism, i. xxxvi, 238
Universe. See *Nature*
Universities, i. 215

Vaninus, ii. 196
Vice, i. 310, 323
Virgil, ii. 27
Virtue, Inquiry concerning, etc., i. 237 ; ii. 50
Virtue, basis of, i. 83, 171, 252-258, 265-338 ; ii. 58, 291
Virtuosoship. See *Taste*
Vossius, ii. 320

War, i. 75
Warburton, i. xxvii
Water, ii. 117
Wharton, ii. 261
Whichcote, i. xii
Will, freedom of, i. 122
Will to believe, ii. 219-221
Wit and Humour, i. 43
Wit, i. 46, 52, 53, 56, 65, 80, 165 ; ii. 216, 231
Women, i. 80, 177, 178
Worldliness, ii. 263, 285
Worship, public, i. 14

Xenophon, i. 146, 167 ; ii. 309

Zeal and zealotry, i. 46, 48, 98, 110, 307 ; ii. 122, 162, 197, 181, 353-369

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